

PROCEEDINGS

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Section "B" of the American Institute for Scientific Research

Vol. II

Part 1

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VOLUME II.

PART I.

PROCEEDINGS

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American Society for Psychical Research

LILY DALE

INTRODUCTION.

By James H. Hyslop.

Mr. Carrington gives below his account of an investigation into the phenomena that are alleged to occur, from year to year, at one of the most distinguished of the spiritualistic camps in America. All that I wish to say here is that he was not sent there with any motive of making an attack on either that organization or its creed, and that I am not now taking up the cudgels against the system which the believers in spiritualism accept. Such places simply invite investigation by the very claims they make. Perhaps they would not have invited it a quarter of a century ago, but now that the English Society has published so much evidence to sustain some of the older claims, it has become necessary to determine what is true and what is false, in such places, where scientific discrimination is not always as much respected as it should be.

This investigation offers an opportunity to say some things which would not be provoked by the ordinary drift of human discussion, and especially at this time. What I wish to emphasize, however, in this Introduction, is that the exposure of things at Lily Dale is not a gratuitous assault on the place or its aims. I am very glad to exempt the organization which owns the place and conducts the meetings there from any intentional complicity in the phenomena which are here the subject of criticism. The letter of President Warne on that matter, which Mr. Carrington embodies in his Re-

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port, is ample indication of what the best spiritualists desire to see effected. No reflection on their beliefs and motives is here expressed or implied by this exposure of what accompanies, and apparently must accompany, the methods which have kept spiritualism alive so long. But this very exemption from direct sympathy and interest in the frauds associated with the work, offers a reason for making some remarks on the whole problem which faces the adherents of that creed.

Spiritualism has, of course, been a concession to the scientific spirit, in so far as it claims to give *evidence* of survival after death. It received no sympathy either from the scientist in this pretension, or from the church. The result was and is that, in order to sustain its allegations, it has thought it a duty to give "demonstrations" of its doctrine as a part of its regular work. At first its meetings and exercises were little or nothing else than "tests," perhaps accompanied by "inspirational" preaching and teaching. Gradually it introduced some of the elements of regular church worship, thus imitating some of the emotional aspects of the orthodox sects. But it has always clung to the "test" as the justification of its existence and as the means of satisfying the sceptic, while it discriminated its own method from the traditional mode of establishing personal conviction. But as a system it has come to the parting of the ways. It insists that it is a scientific religion. But the examination of its claims seem to indicate that it is neither science nor religion. Its methods, at least in public, are not those of science, and its ethical work has not been that of religion.

In the long conflict with science, the more orthodox religions have gradually been forced to emphasize ethical and social work as a primary function of the church, and have more or less abandoned or modified their creeds. In this they have returned, in some respects, to the ethical ideals of their founder,—tho they are not so sure, or at least offer no sureties, of his intellectual belief of a future life. But after first abandoning his social ideals they fought long for theological doctrines, which critical methods have dissolved or are fast dissolving, and are left without any excuse for exist-

ence, except the ethical duties imposed by the early teachers. This recognition of its ethical duties is the one thing that enables the church to play any part at all in modern life. Tho its original creed is held as a matter of faith, the chief influence that supports this faith is the inertia of traditional ethics, which die harder than intellectual doctrines; and belief in a future life is rather an effect of their confidence in an ethical ideal than it is a support of it. How long it will last is another matter: for in all ages ethical conceptions, in the long run, follow beliefs or have their cohesiveness and tenacity determined by them. Seeing this, and intent upon assuring the first condition of a spiritual ideal of life, the spiritualists, from the time of Swedenborg, have laid stress upon the proof of a future life, and while few of them have followed Swedenborg into a dogmatic and unprogressive dependence on authority, they have yielded to the temptation to concentrate their main efforts on a problem which does not belong to religion as an ethical institution, but to science as an investigating agency. The result has been the neglect of both the individual and the social ideal of a spiritual life. In accepting the challenge which science has always issued against religion, to produce evidence of a future life, it has forgotten the primary object for which that belief has existed; and, in seeking the consolation which the belief affords, it has become as distorted in its perspective of life as any of the sects that it aims to displace.

The great error has been in the effort to combine science and religion in a manner in which they will not fit. Science has its place and methods, and religion has its. But we cannot combine the ethics and aesthetics of a ritual with the dirt and dust of the laboratory. The refinement, symbolism, and emotional moods of a ritual hardly consist with the confusion and triviality of scientific tests. That part of the work which aims at proof should be left to the scientist and his laboratory methods, which can never be carried on in public. The demands for the sensational only result in developing frauds to excite the wonder of the credulous. What the spiritualists need to learn is the duty of referring the whole problem of investigation to qualified scientists. If they had done this long

ago; if they had carefully eliminated fraud from the phenomena for which they sought scientific attention; if they had made it clear that they were quite as interested in the ethical and social work of the world as in a future life for personal and selfish reasons, they would have won their triumph fifty years ago. But in their persistent defence of the Fox sisters and the whole crew of frauds which sprang up after them, they have only succeeded in disgusting the intelligent classes until it will now require a longer time and much more effort to convince the world that there are any phenomena at all that deserve attention. If the spiritualists had spent one-tenth the money in legitimate scientific investigation that they have wasted in running after fraud, they might have had something to show for it. But we have still to convince the scientific man that there is anything but fraud and delusion in the whole subject. The principal antagonists to psychic research I find among large numbers of spiritualists, and only the sceptic has the good sense to help it. The spiritualist too often has no confidence in the science which he invokes or in the truth which he believes. He too readily thinks we can convert the world by fooling it or concealing the difficulties of the problem to be solved. What he has to learn is that the primary duty of men is to hand the investigation and proof of the doctrine over to scientific men, and then, under the inspiration of his belief, to enter vigorously into the practical work of ethics. It was all well enough to adopt the same general methods as the church for exciting attention to facts, but the moment that science offered to take up the settlement of the investigating issue, it was the duty of the spiritualist to yield the matter of method to those who could eliminate dubious conditions. But instead of this, it still insists on methods that do not discriminate between the most palpable frauds and genuine phenomena, but which in fact attract more attention to spurious phenomena than to those which have some promise of interest. The methods of spiritualism have outlived their usefulness. They have kept the existence of the phenomena before public attention, but they have never convinced a single man who has had any respect for science. The time has come for a complete change of

policy in this matter,—a suggestion which is made here, not because I have any interest in what popularly passes as spiritualism, but because I admit that there are facts for which spiritualists have a right to claim a most important significance. But these facts will receive no credence or defence until they are protected by the most careful and critical methods. If, then, the spiritualists will simply leave to science the determination of evidence and share with other religious efforts the duty of personal and social ethics, they will be entitled to the consideration they desire. But it will not be until then.

In exposing the frauds which infest the history and methods of spiritualism, as it has been popularly understood, I am frank to say that I do not think its sins are any worse than those which prevail in the business world. They are precisely the same, and there is no reason for exposing them more than the frauds of business. Many a man will hold up his hands in horror at the kind of thing exposed in Mr. Carington's Report who will expect to cheat his neighbor out of his property in practically the same way under the forms of the law. There is no more disposition on the part of the public to live and let live than there is on the part of the adventurers who take the last cent of their dupes and laugh at the most sacred feelings that men can possess. It is not spiritualism alone that is infested with fraud, but the whole basis of modern society, and we are only touching the surface when we call attention to the infection in what claims to be a religion. "Business" does not profess to have any principles but to get all it can of other people's property by hook or by crook, and so is not bound by any maxim of consistency or sincerity of conscience. This is exactly the doctrine of the fraudulent medium, and I shall only insist that they who live in glass houses shall not throw stones.

This is not an apology for such performances as are here exposed. It is only a statement of fact which shows that the task of science may be a larger one than the investigation of spiritualism, and that whatever disgust we feel at the associations of an alleged religion, holds good for other crimes as well. Half the gloating cry of fraud, very often, on the

part of the sceptic is influenced by a desire to escape the belief which the spiritualist with equal prejudice wishes to sustain. The only course to take, then, is to clear the subject of objection at any point, and this can be done only by the most merciless exposure of fraud and the recognition of perfectly immense difficulties in the way of obtaining scientific proof of a future life. Nothing is gained by insisting on evidence that will not meet the strictest demands of scientific method, even tho the adherent of such betrays equal bias in his obstinate blindness to facts. Of one thing, however, we may be sure, and that is, that no intelligent man intends to be fooled in this problem. We cannot afford to be fooled on either side of the issue, and we may as well keep cool heads and admit the truth of scientific method as to destroy our influence by such slatternly methods as lead only to illusion and fraud.

The primary value of a belief in a future life is its ethical implications and the use that can be made of it by rational men to support an ethical view of human life, private and public. It does not always moralize a man by itself, if ever. But whatever limits its influence may have as an isolated conviction, we know enough of history, individual and social, to know that the rational man can strengthen an ethical view of the world by it. This being the case, the spiritualists will have to learn that their methods have had their day of usefulness and that they will have to surrender the evidential aspect of the problem to science, and for their own moral benefit join the other practical efforts in the world, to redeem its evil tendencies. It is quite as easy to be selfish about a future life as about wealth, and it will have no other color if it is to remain in the condition it has been in, ever since the Fox sisters. The sooner that this is recognized the sooner will the organization make its peace with the methods and principles which it has always claimed to respect: namely, those of science. Unless it takes up the practical and ethical functions of a religion, it will be beaten by other churches: for one of the surest things of the future is a reorganization of religious methods in respect of creed, while they continue the social and ethical work that the age has forced upon

them, in lieu of theological controversy. Science must be left to its task of estimating evidence, and when this is done, and done by the spiritualists, they may be sure of their triumph, but not by anything in their present methods.

I am not criticizing individuals, but methods. I freely concede that the motives and aims of the whole system have as much to commend them as in the more orthodox and respectable religious organizations. When a future life wins its victory, the spiritualists will have the credit of having rightly conceived the problem, as one of proving personal identity, and of having insisted, in spite of great adversity, upon the existence of certain facts which certainly have at least that superficial appearance of proving it, and may in the end be conceded that real quality. But, while they can hardly be blamed for erroneous methods in the midst of both orthodox and scientific contempt, they will have to yield to better methods when science overcomes its bigotry, and shows humility enough to actually investigate facts instead of laughing at them. In the meantime we have arrived at a stage of interest and development in the subject that makes it imperative that the discrimination of evidence in this problem shall be wholly deferred to scientific method.

**REPORT OF A TWO-WEEKS' INVESTIGATION
INTO ALLEGED SPIRITUALISTIC PHENOMENA.
WITNESSED AT LILY DALE, NEW YORK.**

By Hereward Carrington.

§ I.

**SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY, TRUMPET SEANCES AND SLATE-
WRITING.**

For a number of years past, those spiritualists who could afford the time and the money have made it a practice of visiting so-called "Camps," situated in various parts of the United States, where they could meet, exchange views and information about "The Cause," and have the opportunity of personally testing the numerous mediums of all classes

that flock to the camps like flies about a honey-comb. In this manner it is possible to test, or at least to have sittings with, a number of first-class mediums, without having to travel all over the country to reach them; and it is, of course, a great advantage to them to have such opportunities for investigation. It is only natural, too, that mediums should go to the various camp meetings, in order to add to their reputation,—by converting a number of doubters to belief in spirit-return, and more firmly rooting the faith of those who already accept the teachings of spiritualism—especially those obtained through these particular mediums. As may be imagined, these camp-meetings become profitable sources of revenue to the mediums, who charge fair prices for their sittings (from \$1.00 to \$2.00, as a rule), and enable the mediums to add to their reputations. When famous mediums go to such camp-meetings, they are literally besieged with persons asking for sittings, and they can give a sitting every half hour during the day, as well as séances in the evenings; and in fact many of these mediums do so. One would think, *a priori*, that, were their mediumship genuine, such continued wear and tear would soon exhaust the medium or his power; yet such does not seem to be the case—some mediums giving from twelve to eighteen sittings every day (for slate-writing, *e. g.*), besides séances two or three evenings each week,—which are attended by from ten to thirty sitters,—at one dollar per head. Such being the case, we might naturally suppose the best mediums would be drawn to the camp meetings,—they having far more opportunity for money and fame-making than if they were to remain in their native town; and, though there are doubtless many inferior and little-known mediums who go to such camp-meetings, still, the majority of them may be taken as representing the best of their kind that can be found or brought together for purposes of investigation. At least we may with justice suppose that what results were obtained from these mediums would be representative of results obtained from mediums as a class anywhere else. Especially is this true of Lily Dale,—the best and most aristocratic camp in the States,—and the best known. Whatever conclusions might be formed from a

study of these mediums would probably apply to all similar camps.

It therefore became a matter of very great interest to ascertain, as far as possible, the average level of the scientific spirit present in a camp of this character, in order to ascertain, so far as possible, the value of the testimony coming from the camp visitants, and the character of the average medium who frequents it. An investigation of this kind would not, of course, affect the character of all other mediums—favorably or otherwise—but would furnish a clue to the character of phenomena generally witnessed; and, if certain well-known mediums were present, would at least afford an opportunity for testing their powers, and the genuineness of the phenomena observed through their mediumship.

It was determined, therefore, by the Secretary, that some systematic and thorough investigation should be made, to determine, so far as possible, the nature of the phenomena at Lily Dale; and I—as one of the Council—was asked to undertake the investigation of the phenomena occurring in that camp. Accordingly, I spent the greater part of two weeks at Lily Dale (from August 3 to 16, 1907), carefully investigating every medium of note there, and having several sittings with certain mediums, where the case or the results seemed to warrant such prolonged inquiry. The results of this investigation I give below. Let me first, however, give a very rapid sketch of Lily Dale—its surroundings and management, in order that the reader may feel a certain familiarity with the camp which he could not otherwise have.

Lily Dale is situated about sixty miles south of Buffalo, New York, and consists solely of the station, a couple of hotels, a few farm houses, and the "Assembly Grounds," of some ten acres,—containing the Hotel of the Assembly, a library building, several smaller halls, a large auditorium (seating, perhaps, two thousand), and a number of small cottages, rented either to visitors, by the season, or to mediums,—in which case one room would be promptly converted into a "séance room," and the window nailed and boarded up for the rest of the season,—effectually shutting out all fresh air thence forward! One would pass such cottages at night, and

hear issuing from them, anything but melodious sounds,—the house itself dark, shadowy, and closely boarded up. Lectures are usually delivered in the big Auditorium twice daily; while all the mediums renting cottages give séances and sittings throughout the day, to whomsoever may call upon them. As most of them are busy, however, these sittings are mostly arranged for in advance. I shall give an account of my own sittings with these mediums immediately.

I arrived in Lily Dale on Saturday afternoon, and found everything in full blast. In one corner of the hotel veranda was an excited group of men, discussing some problem connected with spiritualism. Looking up, I saw the sign "Philosophers' Corner" nailed to the wall of the hotel; and later I discovered a slate (obtained from Keeler, I understand) covered with writing, framed, and christening the corner with that name. After walking about the grounds for some time, and finding out what mediums were present, and where they were situated, I made an appointment for the next day for a spirit-photograph, and a trumpet séance, and rested the remainder of the evening.

The following accounts of séances were written out immediately upon my return to the hotel, in each case directly after the sitting, and frequently from notes made while the séance or sitting was in progress. These records I merely copy now, without change or alteration, except in a few minor details. I shall give the series in as nearly chronological order as possible, though, for various reasons, it will sometimes be better to alter this arrangement, and to give the results of my sittings with one medium (although given on different days) together—thus completing that medium's record, before passing on to consider the next case. This, I think, will be found most satisfactory. I now present the following record for the reader's consideration.

Sitting with A. Norman. (Spirit-Photographer.)

Sunday, August 4, 1907.

I was granted a sitting with this medium immediately upon request. Mr. Norman explained to me that he had no

control over the phenomena, but would obtain for me what he could. I sat on the veranda, and he disappeared into the house, and brought out a large camera and two plates,—already in the slide, prepared. I noticed that there was a small white chalk mark on one side of the “double-back” plate slide (a slide that holds two plates) and this side was carefully inserted foremost. Mr. Norman erased this chalk mark with his finger as he inserted the slide into the camera. The movement was very slight, and would probably have escaped detection in the vast majority of cases. However, I posed, and the photo was taken.

Next, we went indoors; the plate slide was reversed, and the room placed in almost total darkness. I was informed that “the spirits would materialize their own light” and that none was needed. This was “where the mediumship came in.” The second plate was then exposed, the cap being removed for about a minute. During that minute I was informed that I should sit for physical manifestations; and the medium asked me if I had ever sat for a spirit-photographer before. Why was that question asked, I wonder? Was it mere idle curiosity, or was it in order to obtain for me, on the plate, the same faces that I obtained in the first instance—thus tending to “clinch” my faith? We cannot say.

After the second exposure, the blinds were pulled up, and the sitting concluded. A request was made for my *home* address. This I gave—giving, however, a false name, that of “Charles Henderson,” under which name I had registered at the hotel, and which name I gave to every medium on the grounds. The amusing consequences that ensued upon this will be detailed presently. However, I was informed that I must call in a day or so, in order to look at the plates. I was to see these first, and if no results had been obtained, I was to sit again. Mr. Norman then bowed me out (after first requesting and receiving his payment) and expected me to leave. I asked if I might not see the plates developed. The reply was “No, I won’t get at them tonight anyway.” I replied cautiously that I should think it would be very interesting to watch the development of a plate upon which might appear spirit faces; the answer was that these faces devel-

oped in exactly the same manner as any other faces whatever. I then replied that I should like to watch the process, in order to convince myself that they were developed in the manner said, and that they were not already on the plate. The result was to bring forth a flat refusal to allow me to watch the process of development. I then asked if I might bring my own plates next sitting; and that too was refused me. I had to go away content with what I had. If results should be obtained, they would be absolutely inconclusive, since no tests were allowed, nor are tests to be allowed at any future sitting. Spirit faces, when obtained under such conditions, and if unrecognized, would be not only inconclusive, they would be farcical. It remains to be seen what the plates contain.

Later. I have just called on Mr. Norman, and seen the plates taken yesterday. There is only one plate, I find, as the second exposure, made in the dark room, was supposed to be on the *same* plate as that which was exposed upon the veranda. As a matter of fact, I know this to be untrue, for the reason that I saw Norman change the plate slide, after we had taken up our positions in the darkened room. It is more than probable, in my estimation, that no plate at all was exposed in the second case—simply a pretence at photographing being made, and the original plate “doctored;” and this supposition is strengthened by the fact that only *one* exposure is sometimes made (so Norman informed me) and spirit faces come on that! But, as stated before, the faces appearing on the plate are quite inconclusive for the reason that no tests were allowed,—this really strongly indicating fraud. For, if genuine, why should tests of a rational character be objected to?

After much delay, I finally succeeded in securing the two photographs, and not only are none of the faces recognizable, but they do not bear the slightest trace of any family resemblance whatever. They are as alien as possible. One of the faces is that of a woman; the other three of men,—one of them wearing a turban. More than that, the photo shows signs of undoubted fraudulent manipulation. One of the faces (that of the woman) upon being examined through a

magnifying glass, clearly shows the miniature indentations made by the electric needle used in reproducing newspaper cuts. This is clearly noticeable on the forehead, but can be seen to extend all over the face, even with the naked eye, when examined carefully. *This face was, therefore, copied from some newspaper, or from some magazine, reproducing it from the paper, in which it originally appeared.* One of the other faces shows clear marks of manipulation also. The line of the hair extends some distance down the side of the head, beyond the point at which the hair would normally end, and shows that the face was cut out from some magazine, pasted upon a dark background, and photographed upon the same plate upon which my portrait was taken. I referred to this method of obtaining spirit-faces on page 219 of my book, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*.

Since Mr. Norman would submit to no rational test conditions whatever, and inasmuch as the photograph shows perfectly clear indications of manipulation, I think we need have no hesitation in attributing all that transpired through this individual's mediumship, at least on the occasion of my own sitting, to perfectly ordinary methods of deception and the resort to spirits is absurd.

Sitting with Mrs. M. T. McCoy. (Trumpet Medium.)

Monday, August 5, 1907.

By appointment, I called upon Mrs. McCoy this morning, and obtained my sitting, after a short wait. I was ushered into a darkened room, and a lamp was lighted. Every crack and crevice was then carefully covered over, and I was requested to take a seat in the cabinet—a curtained triangular space in one corner of the room. The darkness here was intense, only at the top of the curtain a faint streak of light became manifest,—when my eyes had grown accustomed to the darkness. Immediately I entered the cabinet and took my seat, the lamp was extinguished, and the medium entered the cabinet and took a chair close beside me, letting the cabinet curtains fall behind her.

I was asked to talk as much as possible, and the medium

talked a great deal also. A band was playing outside, in the auditorium. In a few minutes (probably three or four) I felt a touch of the trumpet on the top of my head, very gently. I slid out my hand carefully, and found the trumpet gone from the spot where it had been standing. The medium had slightly withdrawn her body, so that her skirts no longer touched me, and I could not feel her, as I could at first. Once or twice during the séance the medium advanced her foot and touched my legs, saying quickly, "I beg your pardon." It was evident that this was to see where my feet and legs were. A faint whisper then came through the trumpet, and I asked, "Is that father?" I intended to help the medium as much as possible, at first, so as to get her started. Later, I intended asking for tests. The reply was "yes," and the message continued,—giving about the usual messages for mediums of this class, such as:—"I am glad to see you are investigating this grand truth;" "so glad to see you here and talk to you;" etc., etc. The messages and the language were absolutely inappropriate to my father; they could not be more so. For instance, in answering a question of mine, my father replied, "yes, *sir!*" with a very American accent. I may say that my father was a very conservative Englishman, almost classical in his speech, and disliked most things American—particularly the manner of speaking and the slang. It may be imagined how appropriate this was. The voice also said that my father had been ill "many months" before he died; while the truth is that he died as suddenly as the snuffing out of a candle, and was dead before any of us could reach him by train, in reply to telegrams.

The next "spirit" was that of my mother. The usual platitudes were spoken—of the same general character as in the last case—many wrong incidents being given, while the language and style were entirely inappropriate,—many gross slips of speech and of grammar being made. The medium, I may add, was a very illiterate woman, and my mother an exceptionally clever and well-informed woman on many lines.

The next spirit that spoke I claimed as a friend of mine—"James." I asked if it were he, my old friend, and the reply was, "yes." I asked him if he remembered all the tours and

the camping trips we used to take together "by that old lake in Kentucky." Yes, yes; he remembered that well! And was he engaged in electrical work now, as he was here? No, he was engaged in "nothin' partic'lar," there being no "science of electricity" over there. Other intimate scraps of information were given, and many memories recalled. Their value may be estimated when I say that I never knew anyone by the name of James intimately; never had a chum of that name; never was in Kentucky in my life; and, in fact, I made up the whole thing out of my head. It was evidently a "lying spirit," and not that of any friend of mine!

The next spirit was "Professor Stanford"—professor of languages—who would control my "mental faculties" when I sat for development next winter, as I was instructed to do. He is going to make a platform speaker of me! He may be a professor of languages, but if he mangled the other languages as badly as he mangled the English language, through the trumpet, I am afraid he would make an instructor very dangerous to follow!

The next spirit was a supposed sister of mine, who also promised to assist me in my development. At this point, the medium asserted that she saw a slit of light coming from beneath the curtain, and stooped down and adjusted the curtain of the cabinet. A few moments later an "intelligent force" began to manifest in the room outside the cabinet—shaking a bell and tambourine on the table close to the medium's left hand. It claimed to be the spirit of an Indian. Finally, the bell and tambourine fell off the table, onto the floor, and came inside the cabinet of their own accord. The medium took the tambourine upon her lap, but soon placed it upon the floor again. It rattled with her movements! I had no doubt whatever that the medium picked up a thread, that was upon the floor, at the moment she pretended to adjust the curtain; and by means of this thread, pulled the bell and the tambourine, previously attached to the other end of this thread, into the cabinet. I may say that all the information the trumpet gave me I supplied to the medium first, and false as well as true information was given back to me through the trumpet. It was therefore only a question of whether the

medium produced the voice or not, and that we must now consider.

Several times, during the séance, I leant forward in my chair and advanced my ear close to the medium's head. In this manner I was enabled to reach a point from four to six inches from her mouth. *I distinctly heard the medium doing the talking herself*,—the sound of the constrained voice being distinctly audible in her throat. There was no doubt in my mind that she was doing the talking, as I could clearly hear it. Several times I saw the trumpet outlined against the light at the top of the cabinet, and every time the angle of the trumpet indicated that it was pointing directly for the medium's mouth. Her own voice and the voice issuing from the trumpet were never heard together, and the voices were such as the medium might easily have imitated. Several times I felt the medium moving about, and heard the rustle of her skirts. Everything pointed to the fact that the medium and she alone was doing the talking—even had I not heard her doing so. My conclusion is, therefore, that the phenomena observed by me through this medium are to be explained by the most obvious and simple trickery.

Sitting with Mrs. S. E. Pemberton. (Trumpet Medium.)

August 5, 1907.

My experiences with this medium simply duplicate those with Mrs. McCoy. I was ushered into a darkened room, and seated in a chair close beside the medium. We sat in the middle of the room, in this case, and not in any cabinet. The medium sat beside me, after having placed a large tin trumpet on the floor in front of me, and about three feet from herself. The light was then extinguished. The medium grasped my right hand in her left, and we sat in darkness for a few minutes, chatting. At the conclusion of that time, a faint noise was heard to issue from the trumpet, and one by one all my old fictitious friends appeared—James Robinson, of Kentucky, (where I have never been); Jane and Robert Henderson—my supposed mother and father; sisters, brothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, as well as the customary Indian Con-

trol—all of whom, with the exception of the Indian Control—I know positively never existed. Several names were thrown out by the medium, none of which were recognized, (*i. e.*, she was “fishing,”) and relationships claimed which were false. The information was volunteered that my father died as the result of an accident on the railroad (quite untrue); and, upon my asking him if he remembered his last trip to Chicago, he replied, “oh, yes, quite well,” and volunteered remarks about it. As a matter of fact, he had never been to America in his life! Much other false information of this kind was given, that it would be useless to repeat. Several times, during the séance, I leaned over towards the medium and again distinctly *heard* her vocalizing the sounds in her own throat, and muttering or whispering them into the trumpet—the voices being modified or changed according to the direction of the trumpet—louder and more distinct when turned away from the sitter, and *vice versa*. To my mind, the whole séance was obviously and conclusively worthless throughout. It remains to be said that the medium decried fraud severely just before the séance commenced,—stating that there was doubtless much fraud in connection with the subject. Indeed, one would think so!

Sitting with A. Norman, for Slate-Writing.

August 13, 1907.

According to appointment, I called on Mr. Norman, and, after considerable waiting, obtained a sitting. The room in which the sitting took place was a small one, shaded from the sunlight, and containing only a table and two chairs. The latter were on opposite sides of the table—from which hung a table-cloth, reaching the floor on all sides. Almost one-half of this table was taken up by a large music box, which the medium proceeded to wind up as soon as we took our seats. It played throughout the sitting, until the writing had been obtained on the slates. The table was pushed against the wall of the room, so it would have been an easy matter for some person in an adjoining room to have opened a trap-door, connecting the two rooms, under the table (hidden by the

long table-cloth) and reached his or her arm under the table in that manner. But of this later.

At the request of the medium, I asked two questions—writing them upon a large sheet of paper—torn from a pad, and placed this piece of paper in an envelope. The questions were as follows:—

(1) "Dear Mother, (Jane Henderson):

Were you with me in Chicago the other day? I felt your influence strongly. Your son, Charles Henderson."

(2) "Dear Father, (Robert Henderson):

Brother Bob wants to sell our old home in Chicago. Would you advise it? Your son, Charles Henderson."

Both of these questions were written upon a single sheet of paper, which I then folded and placed in the envelope. The latter was not sealed. The medium then allowed me to inspect two slates, which he placed together, the envelope being between them. A rubber band was then placed around both slates. The medium then remarked: "Now, you hold the slates with me under the table." He took the two slates, and apparently placed them beneath the table. I placed my hand under the table on my side, through a slit in the table-cloth, and caught hold of the slates from my side of the table. In reality, an exchange was made at that time, and I distinctly saw the medium drop my two slates onto his lap, and hand me a duplicate pair of slates to hold. My slates rested upon his knees.

We waited for several minutes, when the medium remarked: "We had better hold the slates above the table now," and withdrew the two slates, placing them on the top of the table. He then covered them with a black cloth, and our hands were placed upon the slates, over the cloth, where they remained several minutes. The music box was playing all this time. At the end of about four or five minutes, the medium removed his hands, requested me to remove mine, lifted off the black cloth, and placed the two slates beneath the table again (apparently) where we again held them for some time. At the end of about three minutes, I was requested to remove the slates myself. On doing so, I found the insides of both slates covered with writing, while the en-

velope containing my questions were still between the slates. The answers were as follows:

(1) "My dear son; Mother is here to love and bless you. Go on dear in this truth. I am often with you and it was me with you. You have grand forces with you my darling boy, and you will receive grand things from the spirit side. Give my love to all and my blessings will attend you. Mother, Jane Henderson."

Comments. The writing is exceedingly bad, and it will be seen that the grammar and construction of the "communication" is atrocious. "It was me with you!" And I wonder who Jane Henderson is? And she was with me in Chicago the other day! I have not been in Chicago since 1903,—when my mother was still living.

(2) The second slate contained the following message:

"My dear son Charley. I am here and so happy to reach you for I wanted to give you a little advice—both for the material and the spiritual. Yes, dear, I think it will be all right to sell the house. You will have an offer for it and I will impress you when it is right. Tell Rob I am often with him. Charley, we want you to sit and I will give you writing when you are sufficiently developed. It will give you more satisfaction than all the pleasures of the world. I have tried to show my face on your picture. Mother is here with me. Good-bye, Father, Robert Henderson, with love."

Comments. There is no such person as Robert Henderson, so far as I know. My name is not Charley. We have no house in Chicago, and never had one. I have not and never had any brother Bob. The same bad English, and the same bad handwriting were present, as in the last case, and obviously written by the same person. I may add that my father was one of the most expert and beautiful writers I have ever met, and spent a great part of his life writing. I need hardly add that the message is, therefore, somewhat uncharacteristic.

So, taking into account these facts, we may be certain that no spirit was involved in the production of the writing; and I may add that, *since no slate-pencil was placed between the slates*, the writing must have occurred in some other manner. The manner of obtaining the writing on the slates might have been in either one of the following ways:

(1) When the medium placed the slates beneath the table the first time, he dropped the two slates containing the envelope (in which were my questions) onto his knees and passed me a dummy or duplicate pair to hold. That much I distinctly saw done. When I grasped the duplicate slates, the medium rested his end of the slates on his knees, and, with his disengaged right hand, (our unoccupied hands were clasped above the table) worked off the rubber band, opened the slates, read my questions, wrote the answers on the slates, replaced the envelope between the slates, and re-fastened them. The holding of the slates above the table was solely for the purpose of lifting the slates up and down twice, and so affording opportunity for substitution on two separate occasions. When the slates were placed beneath the table the second time, they were once more substituted for those upon which the messages had been written. The trick was now done, and I could remove the slates myself at any time.

(2) The second method would involve a confederate—probably his wife, who assists in developing his spirit-photographs. In such a case, a trap-door would be cut in the wall, between the two rooms. Since the table was pushed up against the wall, it effectually concealed this trap, and it would be possible for the medium to pass the original set of slates into the hands of the person in the next room, that person merely extending his or her hands under the table, to receive such slates. This person, the confederate, would then withdraw into the next room, open the slates, read the questions, write the answers on the slates, replace the envelope, and fasten the slates together again. She would then open the trap, (the music box would cover any faint sound this might make) and touch the medium's foot. He would then know that the writing was completed. He would remove the

slates from the top of the table—where they had rested until that moment—and replace them beneath the table—really substituting these two for the two handed him by his assistant. These two would be the ones that were held, and finally removed and inspected by the sitter. The trick might have been worked in either way; but of one thing I am *sure*, and that is, that the slates were twice exchanged when placed beneath the table, since I distinctly saw the medium effect this exchange of slates on two occasions. In view of the facts that no spirits wrote the messages; that fraud was quite possible; that I actually saw the substitution of slates on two occasions; and that this medium (as I subsequently learned) has been exposed in the past, I think we shall be quite justified in asserting that fraud is the true and sufficient explanation of this supposed case of spirit-slate-writing.

§ II.

MATERIALIZING SEANCES.

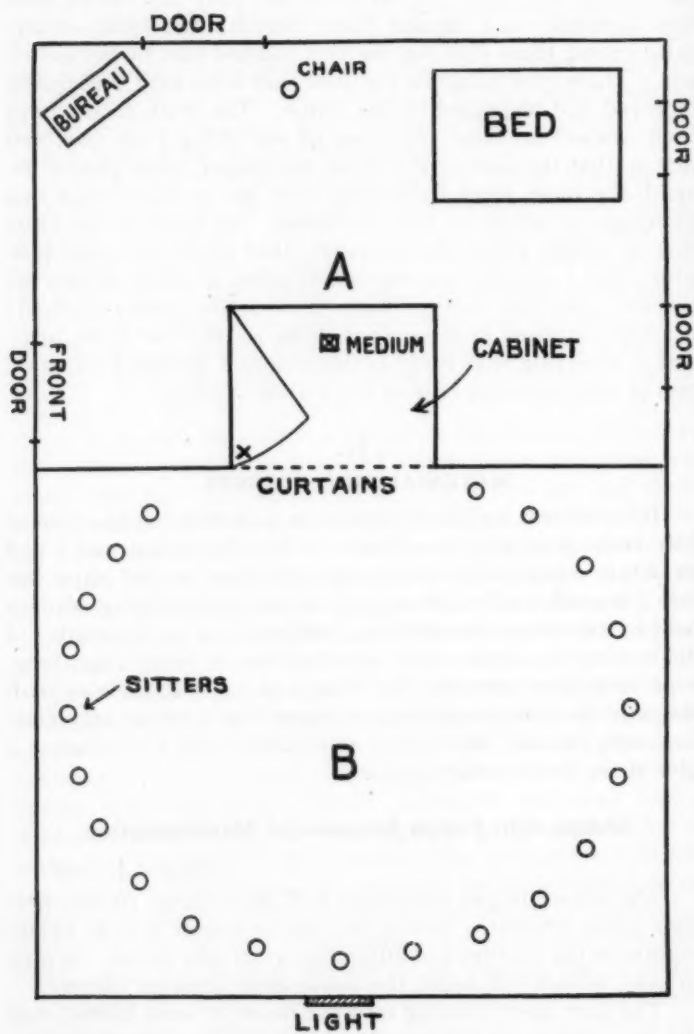
It is difficult to obtain a place in a materializing circle at Lily Dale, as strangers are more or less distrusted, and I had to obtain a practical recommendation from an old sitter before I was allowed to attend any of the materializing séances held by the three materializing mediums on the grounds. I did manage to obtain such introductions in every case, however, and give herewith the results of my experiences with the only three materializing mediums that were at Lily Dale—Joseph Jonson, Mrs. Moss, of Chicago, and C. Nichols. I give these in the order indicated.

Séance with Joseph Jonson—for Materialization.

August 5, 1907.

The séance began soon after 8 P. M.,—about twenty persons being present. Before the séance began, a brief examination of the cabinet and adjoining room was made. A plan follows, which will make the subsequent account clearer.

The four doors leading into the room A. were locked, and the keys placed in the pocket of one of the members of the circle. They were not bolted or fastened in any other way



whatever, and the keyholes were not sealed. Even if they had been, the doors would have been opened from the *outside*, by means of duplicate keys, and so the sealing would have been useless. No examination of the rooms into which these various doors led was allowed. It will be noted that the bed was pulled away from one of the doors a good fifteen inches,—a most significant fact. The doors were all hung with heavy portière curtains. The cabinet was constructed of a light wooden framework, to which was tacked black material. The tack-heads were on the *outside* of the cabinet. One of the three walls of the cabinet hinged inward, and was fastened with a padlock at X. The key was retained and the keyhole sealed. Most of the sitters protested against the necessity of any examination at all! For my own part, I considered the “conditions” so exceedingly bad,—so ridiculous, in fact, and suggestive of fraud,—as to be utterly worthless for all evidential purposes. Even were any forms or results obtained, nothing would be proved,—since the most simple fraud would be quite possible. All that any “spirit” would have to do would be to enter room A., by one of the three doors leading to the adjoining rooms; creep up to the cabinet; pry out four or five of the tacks (tacking the black cloth onto the frame-work) lift up one corner, and enter the cabinet. The light was regulated from the cabinet. At the conclusion of the séance, the cloth would be drawn taut, at the corner that had been released by withdrawing the tacks, the tacks would be pressed home again, and an exit made into one of the adjoining rooms.

One fact clearly indicated that such a method *was* pursued. It is this. Shortly after the singing began, the curtains dividing the cabinet from the room B. swayed inward to a considerable extent,—remaining in that position for some seconds. This could only have resulted from a draught of air; and a draught of air could have been caused only by the opening of some door—since every door and window in both rooms was closed and locked. Indeed, this draught was so noticeable that one of the sitters remarked upon it—though she connected it with nothing fraudulent. To my mind it clearly indicated the possibility of fraud.

The first part of the séance was tedious and something of a fiasco. This might have been brought about by the presence of a very obnoxious man in the circle, whose remarks and insinuations were objectionable to everyone. Finally, the circle was broken up,—nothing having transpired,—and he left in dudgeon. The circle was then re-formed, and the singing begun again. While I personally believe that nothing happened while he was there because the medium feared exposure, still, in justice to the medium, it must be admitted that, if the manifestations were genuine, this man's presence would probably have acted in a similar manner. No conclusion, for or against, is, therefore, to be drawn from this fact.

Soon after the circle was re-formed, "spirits" began to issue from the cabinet—or at least to appear at the opening of the curtains. These forms were certainly not lay-figures, and were certainly not the medium,—but, as I have shown, there would have been no difficulty in smuggling confederates into the cabinet. There was two or three small girls, a grown-up woman, and two or three men who appeared. Most of these were more or less recognized by the sitters—though the light was exceedingly bad, and the "spirits" kept to the shadow of the curtains all the time. These spirits could all have been produced by a small girl, a grown-up woman, and the medium himself. I can only speak of the form that came to me, and which was said to be that of my sister. She came as a pretty girl of about seventeen, with long, dark hair, falling down upon her shoulders. She did not speak, but touched me with an unmistakably human hand, warm and life-like. I could see her face only very indistinctly, but enough to know that it was that of a girl. I was not allowed to touch the form, but the manager held both my hands while I talked to it—a precaution, I may add, that was taken in every case. Evidently the medium did not care to risk any exposure. I may say that my sister died years before I was born, soon after her birth. I never knew her, except as a name. Were she now living, she would be nearly forty years of age. The spirit representing her was, therefore, somewhat out of place and incorrect.

• The materializations seemed to me to be easily explained

by the well-known methods of conjurers, and this for several reasons: (1) that no test conditions were imposed; (2) that the form that came to me, as a sister, was absolutely unlike any possible sister of mine—either on the theory that she appeared to me as she passed out, or as she now is; (3) that the light was so low that nothing was possible in the way of identification; (4) that several incidents strongly suggested trickery—the most prominent being the swaying of the curtains, above referred to; the fact that a faint strip of light was once visible in room A., when the curtains were parted, while there should have been no light, if all doors and windows had remained closed; the fact that, in several of the visible dematerializations, I distinctly *saw the process*—saw the figure bend down gradually, then lie flat, and finally pull the head under a piece of black cloth with a jerk; that, in visible materializations, I also saw the process—saw the form gradually stand more and more erect, until its full height had been attained; the fact that a trumpet was accidentally kicked over by a spirit, when in the cabinet, this being followed by a smothered ejaculation; the fact that this medium has been previously exposed, as I afterwards ascertained;—for all these and other reasons that it would take too long to detail here, I came to the conclusion that fraud alone would account for all the manifestations observed in the presence of this médium.

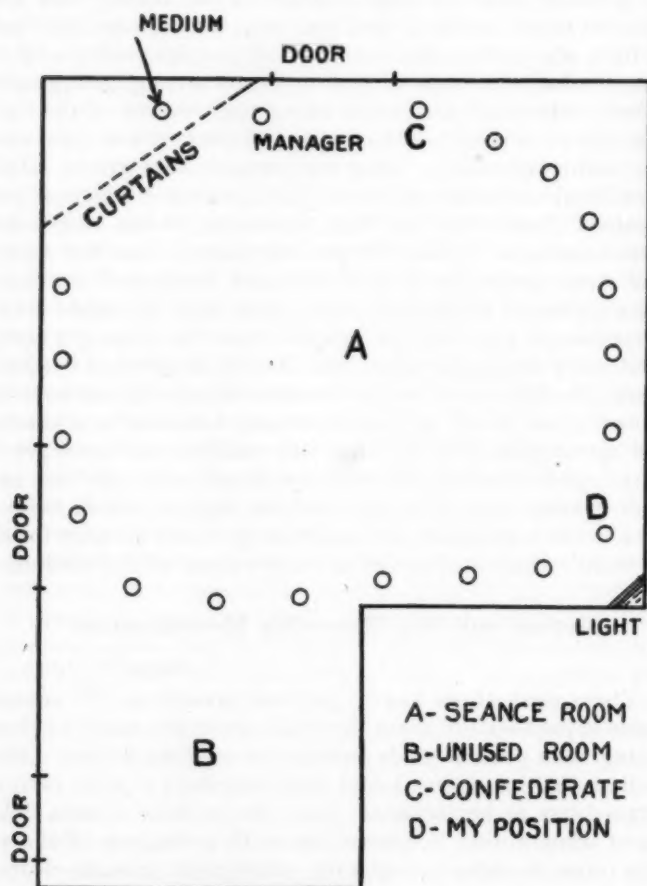
Séance with Mrs. Moss—For Materialization.

August 6, 1907.

There were about twenty persons present at this séance, beside myself—all of them thorough believers, many of them having been present at the séance the evening before. This medium had just arrived, and there had been a great rush to obtain seats at her séances. Only by a lucky chance did I get in when I did. I append herewith a diagram of the séance room, in order to make my subsequent remarks clearer.

A brief examination of the cabinet was made. As examinations of this kind are quite useless, I did not take part in it. Traps can always be cut so as to escape a hasty examination, and it is quite useless to look for them in the cabinet. So

long as phenomena of this sort are produced in the medium's own house, it is almost impossible to circumvent trickery, and it is useless to attempt it. No examination was made, either



of the medium or the manager, nor were we asked to examine them. I considered the conditions were such as to render trickery quite possible, therefore,—though of course not

proved because of its possibility. Proof would have to come later, if it came at all. It will be observed that one door practically touches the curtains of the cabinet—a most suspicious fact. But of that immediately.

Medium and manager both stood close to this door, by the cabinet, preparatory to extinguishing the lamp. This was suddenly blown out, and then there came a hunt for a table upon which to stand it! None was to be found! The medium and her manager fussed in and out of the door several times, completely darkening and blocking the entrance. *I am convinced that a young girl slipped through this door and into the cabinet the moment the lamp was blown out,—*when the medium and the manager were standing in the doorway, and when the eyes of the sitters were not in a condition to see anything in the intense darkness, following immediately upon the extinguishing of this lamp. Even were no trap doors employed, it would have been quite possible for one or two confederates to have entered the cabinet in this manner, at that time. The actions of the medium and her manager were certainly flurried and anxious, at that moment—more so than at any other time.

The medium finally entered the cabinet, and a brief speech was made by the manager, calling attention to this door, and showing that it could only be opened with great difficulty, and with considerable noise. This was true, as the door “stuck.” Any person in the circle was invited to come up and try to open that door silently. I tried—it was impossible. Alas! I am afraid it was a case of “locking the stable door after the horse was stolen.” Why was that door not shut *before* the lamp was extinguished?

The medium entered a brief protest, from within the cabinet; calling attention to the fact that it was “*himpossible*” to build a cabinet that wasn’t near *some* door or window, and she thought it a shame that “a *honorable* woman should be *haccused* of wishin’ to deceive ’er sitters—after all these ye’rs.” Evidently her British Lion was aroused, and displayed himself in her language! We are indebted to the medium very much for that opening speech, as we shall presently see.

The room being now dark, the usual period of waiting and singing was endured—a woman sitting next the door at C. taking an active part in all the songs. She was, I am quite convinced, a confederate—not on that account, but because of the fact that she seemed to know so much of the medium's business, and reminded the manager of two or three points he had forgotten to mention in his opening speech. It is impossible to convey my conviction to others: I can only state it. It was to receive further confirmation later, however.

The usual forms now issued from, and stood at, the cabinet: one skipped about the room, wearing a belt of phosphorescent stars. But the majority of the forms merely appeared between the curtains, indicated certain persons to whom they desired to talk, and carried on a whispered conversation with such persons, when they stepped up to the cabinet. The forms were all clothed alike—in a long, white robe, and were very indistinct. No test information whatever was given, except such as had already been supplied by the sitters, or had been given through other materializing mediums. Thus, as soon as a gentleman in the circle stated that a son of his—a young man—had been killed some months previously in an accident,—that young man appeared and referred to the accident, etc. No other information of any sort was given—nothing was volunteered.

Besides the juvenile spirits that appeared from time to time, there also materialized the forms of some men and women. These did not advance into the room, but remained at the opening of the curtains. These forms were, without exception, the medium herself (wearing a long, white robe and disguised), or wearing a mask that enveloped her face. How do I know this? For the reason that every one of the spirits—both male and female—spoke the same bad English as did the medium; because they one and all left out their H's, where they were wanted, and put them in where they were not wanted, just as the under-bred, uneducated English woman did; and because the spirits, one and all, gave a little snorting gasp at the end of each sentence, when they got out of breath—just as the medium did. She is an exceedingly fat woman, and gets out of breath easily. I listened care-

fully, and in every single instance I could detect and trace this similarity.

My sister "Eva" materialized for me. I suggested "Eva" and she 'came.' I never had a sister Eva, so she was a little out of place. However, she 'came' as a little girl about ten years old, with a hooked nose, bright black eyes, and a fringe of false hair over her forehead. Her doll-like appearance was very manifest. After she de-materialized, I was on the point of walking back to my chair, but was told to wait. I returned to the curtains of the cabinet, and my mother announced herself present, "who had died from consumption." The curtains were pulled aside, and I put my face close to the opening, since it was so dark I could see nothing. And there, in the dim twilight of that séance room, I beheld one of the most ghastly, most truly terrifying faces I have even seen. It was white and drawn, and almost shiny in its glossy, ashen hue. The eyes were wide open and staring—fixed. The head and face were encircled in white; and altogether the face was one of the most appalling I have ever beheld, and it would have required a great deal of fortitude, for the moment, to look steadfastly at that terrifying face,—in that still, quiet room, in response to the spirit's demand: "Look at me!" The distance between our faces was not more than six inches; and, after the first shock, I regarded the face intently. I was spurred by curiosity and excitement, and prompted yet further by the spirit form, who grasped my wrist, through the curtain, and drew me yet closer—until I was nearly in the cabinet itself. I remembered that my mother had not died from consumption, and that the present face in no wise resembled hers, and my feeling of terror lasted but an instant; but it was there at the time, I confess. I regarded the face intently, and it was gradually withdrawn into the shadow of the cabinet, and the curtains pulled over it. *I am certain that, had I been in an excited and unbalanced frame of mind at that instant, I should have sworn that the face actually melted away as I looked at it.* But my mental balance was by that time regained, and I could analyze what was before me. I can quite easily see how it is that persons can swear to the melting away of a face before their eyes, after

my own experience. The appearances clearly indicated that, and it was only my alertness to the possibility of deception, in this direction, which prevented my testifying to the same effect.

While most of the sitters were convinced of the identity of the spirits, all were not equally satisfied. Thus, two brothers and two sisters went to the cabinet, while "their mother" materialized. Both the men were satisfied, but neither of the women were. Others could not recognize their departed, while many of the supposed "recognitions" were absurd. The figure might have been anybody or anything, and I had one of the best seats in the room for observing all that went on.

Early in the séance we were requested to keep our feet flat on the floor and our hands on our knees. In that way, we were told, we should get better results. A chance remark, later on, made plain to me the real reason for this request. "Starlight"—she of the phosphorescent belt—was prancing about the room, and someone remarked that she never tripped over anyone's feet. She immediately replied: "No, if you all kept your feet flat as you were told to, I never would." So *that* was the reason for keeping the feet flat on the floor; in order to prevent "Starlight" from tripping over them, and falling to the floor with an audible and material thud!

Another thing I noticed was, that the manager stood very close to me when my friends and relatives materialized. I was a new-comer, and this was evidently to frustrate any attempt on my part to "grab." I had no such intentions, however, having given my word that I would not.

I noticed one or two interesting things, in connection with the séance. One was that the little girl, who played the part of the junior spooks, was the *very same little girl* who played similar parts at the materializing séance the evening before. Her speech, her language, her mannerisms, were all the same; and I have no doubt whatever that both mediums hired the same little girl—who went from one circle to the other. And what makes this all the more probable is the

fact that these materializing mediums held séances on *alternate* nights,—on different evenings; and the same confederate would, therefore, ‘spook’ for both mediums. As I have discussed this question at considerable length elsewhere, however, I shall not devote more space to it here.

It will be remembered that the door, close to the cabinet, was closed *after* the light was extinguished—and after the confederate was safely in the cabinet. If that confederate were to escape, therefore, it would be necessary to open the door again *before* the light was turned up, for otherwise escape would be impossible. I determined to watch for this. It may be imagined, then, that I was considerably surprised when, at the conclusion of the séance, the lamp was lighted without this door having been opened. For a moment, I thought I must have been wrong; but the doors of the séance room were thrown open at that moment, and the people began to pay their money and file out. I walked over to the cabinet, to again look inside, and possibly throw some further light on the mystery, but was confronted by the woman who had led in the singing, and taken so active a part in the operations throughout—who sat next the door (at C.) and who was, I am convinced, a confederate. ‘No; I could not see the medium; she was exhausted;’ that was what I was told; and I was not permitted to enter, look into, or even approach the cabinet. But I got near enough to hear smothered whisperings inside. The spirits were evidently inside the cabinet, talking with the medium! No one had even thought of examining the cabinet after the séance was over, and it was consequently unnecessary for the little girl, who had produced the manifestations (or her share of them) to escape at all—thus accounting for the puzzling fact that the door had remained closed, as before stated. This capped the climax, and furnished the final proof that the manifestations observed by me, and obtained through this medium, were of the usual kind throughout; and there is not the least shread of evidence for anything spiritistic or even supernormal in the whole performance, from beginning to end.

August 12, 1907.

In order to test my hypothesis further, I asked a lady who was about to attend one of Mrs. Moss's séances to note particularly whether the lamp was extinguished *before* the door, leading from the séance room to the kitchen, was closed, or not. She reported next day that such *was* the case. An "accident" of this kind does not happen every night; but suggests premeditated artifice. It suggests, in short, that this is a dodge, resorted to at every séance, in order to introduce a confederate into the séance-room.

Later.

In a letter, received from this same lady, some days after I left Lily Dale, was contained the following information:

".....Dr. —— (I don't remember his name) went to the Moss séance and seized the medium masquerading as a *child*. Oh! The shame of it. He was promptly given back his money, and put out of the house."

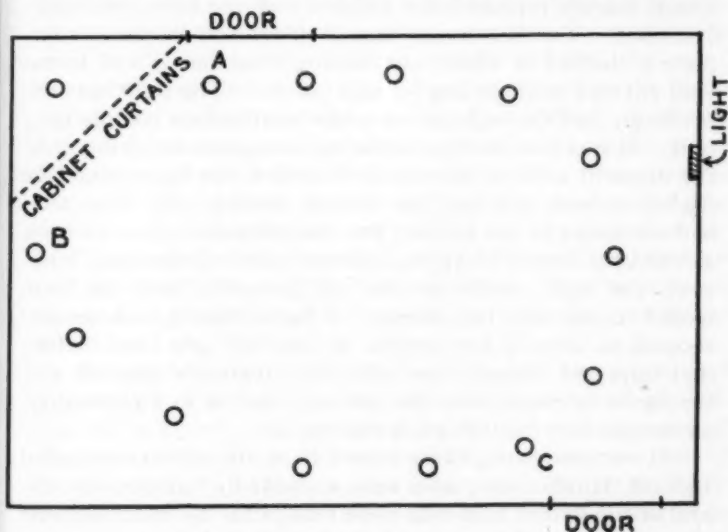
I think this will complete this medium's record, so far as we need concern ourselves with it. It shows, also, that the spiritualists, at camp meetings of this character, do not want the truth; but will continue to patronize mediums that have been exposed time and time again, rather than admit that they have been humbugged.

Séance with C. Nichols—For Materialization.

August 8, 1907.

About twelve persons, besides myself, attended this séance,—the medium preferring fewer sitters than most of the others. In speaking to several of the ladies and gentlemen on the veranda before the séance began, they told me that the medium had been in their home for several days, holding séances, during which period they had satisfied themselves of his honesty. The forms were less distinct, it was said,—and for that reason, I thought, more probably honest. Soon after this we went into the house, and we were arranged somewhat as follows. I subjoin a diagram of the séance-room.

The two persons, sitting at A. and B. respectively, can be treated as confederates. At B. was a man who explained much, expounding the difficulties of spirit-communication, etc.; and at A. was seated a woman who led in the singing, and who knew much about the medium and his work. She stood up a great many times, and it was upon her arm that many of the materialized spirits walked into the room. My own position was at C. It will be observed that there was a door close to the cabinet curtains, and this was opened just



before the séance began "in order to give the sitters some air," and remained open throughout the séance.

It would have been the easiest thing in the world, therefore, for a confederate to creep into the cabinet from the adjoining room—especially when the lady at A. stood up, thus effectually blocking all view of this part of the room. The adjoining room was not searched, and the doors were not sealed, not even locked. The medium was not searched, nor was the cabinet examined—either before or after the séance. A trap-door was, therefore, quite possible; though I do not

think it was used. The supposition receives some support from the fact that the carpet had been removed from the floor of the room, leaving the bare boards exposed to view. We were shown the interior of the cabinet, before the séance began, by the medium, who made a brief speech. The light was regulated from the cabinet by means of a string, passing from the one to the other. The light was lowered, and the séance began.

I need not repeat, in detail, the happenings of this séance, which merely repeated the incidents of the two previously described. Various forms issued from the cabinet, completely clothed in white, and having their heads and forms well covered with veiling—a sort of net. The light was exceedingly bad throughout, even the spiritualists complaining of it. It was next to impossible to distinguish anything. At the moment when a spirit was identified, the light would be slightly raised, and the face turned towards the sitter who had advanced to the cabinet for that purpose. Just so soon as the eyes began to appreciate the detail of the face, however, the light would be shut off instantly, and the form would retreat into the cabinet. I found that it took several seconds to identify any person, in that dim light; and, before that time had elapsed, the light was invariably shut off and the figure retreated into the cabinet. So far as I remember, no one positive identification was made.

At various times, there issued from the cabinet so-called Indians, Hindus, etc., who were supposedly 'guides' of several of the sitters, and who were recognized by them because of their size, and because of the fact that their names were whispered. No spirit spoke above a whisper, except the "cabinet control," who "pasted the forms together," and who talked in a childish voice, obviously forced and disguised. No test information was given, except in one case. An old gentleman—a constant attendant at séances—said to his daughter, who materialized, "touch me where you said you would, this morning,—remember?" At the same time he advanced his head. The spirit touched him lightly on the top of the head. He claimed this as an excellent test. Any one would have guessed the spot, however, from the manner

in which he advanced his head towards the medium; and in any case we have only to suppose a collusion between the trumpet medium and the materializing medium in order to account for the fact. I have discussed this matter of collusion elsewhere.

A rather amusing incident occurred, during the séance. One of the spirits caught its drapery in the points of one of the ladies' hats. Did the piece of drapery dematerialize? No indeed! The poor spirit had to wait ignominiously, outside the cabinet, in the middle of the floor, while the drapery was unhooked! Another incident was this. Towards the close of the séance the medium walked out into the room, several times, "in a trance"—a form appearing at the opening of the cabinet curtains, at the same time. Evidently some confederate was employed. When the medium returned to the cabinet, a head was thrust from the opening, between the curtains, and the light was turned up. "The medium," exclaimed some one. "If it is, he's grown whiskers," remarked some one else. (Which shows that spiritualists do not lack a sense of humor, at times). But the solution at once suggested itself; the medium had been "transfigured!"

On one occasion, the light was accidentally turned on, and a young girl was distinctly seen, standing outside the cabinet. She did not melt, as a result of the sudden and unexpected illumination, however, but opened the curtains, and darted into the cabinet. The light was lowered by closing the shutter with a bang. On another occasion, a sound issued from the cabinet, exactly corresponding to one that would be produced by accidentally knocking one's elbow against a plastered wall.

Only one figure 'came' for me—my mother. The form did not speak, but advanced into the room. I advanced, and, in response to my question whether it was she, the figure bowed. At that instant, the light was turned on quite full for an instant, and I clearly saw that the form before me was being represented by a young girl, about sixteen years of age, with long brown hair. The face was turned half away from me, and shielded by the drapery. I clearly saw the face for

that instant, however, and the fraud stood confessed—for me. Soon after this, the séance ended.

By subsequent inquiry, I have ascertained that this medium has been exposed before, on these very grounds. He was unable to return for three years. On that occasion it was proved that he and another medium were in the habit of meeting at a certain spot in the woods and exchanging information about sitters. They were caught in the act of thus exchanging their information by the spiritualists present at the time, and were forced to leave the grounds. Taken in connection with the facts brought forward in the above report, I think we need not stretch our imaginations very far in conceiving that fraud alone is the adequate explanation of all the phenomena witnessed at the séance described above.

§ III.

PIERRE L. O. A. KEELER.

Of all the slate-writing mediums in this country, there is probably not one more celebrated—and justly celebrated—than Pierre L. O. A. Keeler, of Washington, D. C. For twenty-eight years, Keeler has been holding slate-writing séances in Washington, and every summer, for the past twenty-three years (so he informed me), he has visited Lily Dale,—and taken away about three thousand dollars on each occasion! From all of which it will be readily enough understood that Keeler is a very famous slate-writer, and one of the best (and I do not hesitate to say *the* best) in his line of work—I mean “phase” of mediumship. From some of the reports that had been sent into the office of the A. S. P. R., and which I had read, it became evident that the investigation of Keeler’s mediumship was of the utmost importance, and that he should be investigated, even if no other medium were visited, during my stay in Lily Dale. Perhaps the importance of settling this question of Keeler’s mediumship will be more apparent when I state that some of the reports sent in to the office of the Society were detailed, careful and to all appearances absolutely conclusive—apparently proving beyond all reasonable doubt that Keeler’s slate-writing per-

formances were genuine, and could not have been produced by any kind or sort of fraud imaginable. To give my readers some idea of the excellence of the accounts sent in, concerning this medium, and the impossibility of accounting for them by fraud (to all appearances), I quote in this place parts of a report by one of our members,—a physician and a man in the Government service,—and one, it will be seen, who is unusually critical and careful in his acceptance of facts and in his manner of obtaining them. I alter the initials and names throughout, in order to conceal the identity of this contributor, since publicity is prohibited. The detailed record, containing all names in full is before me, however, and is on file in the office of the A. S. P. R. This account reads in part as follows:

"On Sunday morning I took two new slates, which I purchased myself in the open market, and cleaned them most carefully with water and rag. For purposes of identification, I noted the following concerning them, before turning them over to Mrs. A., setting the notes of identification down in my scientific record. . . . Mrs. A. brought these two slates back to me from Mr. Keeler's, and I proceeded with a rule in hand to identify them, which I did. There is absolutely no mistake about this.

"Mrs. A. took the two slates, which I had carefully wrapped in paper, the four sealed envelopes (unaddressed) [which had been prepared, as stated in the omitted portion of the report] and, accompanied by her little daughter, proceeded to Mr. Keeler's house.

"Mr. K. [Keeler] came down into the reception room and asked Mrs. A. if she had brought her own slates, and if there was any metal on them. He received a negative answer as to the metal. Mr. K. said that he would be ready in three minutes. He went to the back part of the house, and returned in the same way he went. They then proceeded upstairs to the séance-room, which is in the front of the house. . . . Mrs. A. and Keeler entered the séance-room. This room contains simply a table, carpet, a rug or two, and pictures. There are three large bay windows. The curtains were up—the shades—and the sunlight and breeze came freely in. The table is an ordinary kitchen table, open underneath; absolutely no space under it to conceal a boy or confederate of any kind; has a spread of some kind of cloth which hangs down about six inches on the four sides. The two doors leading from the room into the hall were open during the sitting. Mrs. A., who had been reading various books on trick

slate-writing, magic, etc., says that there is absolutely no suspicion of an electric apparatus of any kind. She went into the room with the determination to do at least two things—watch those two slates and the four notes.

"Mr. K. asked Mrs. A. if she had written the notes herself, in her own hand. She replied in the affirmative, not knowing that one of them was in my handwriting. [Mr. A. had added one, unknown to his wife, who took them to Keeler for her sitting.] The two sat on opposite sides of the table—about three feet long and two feet wide. Mr. K. had Mrs. A. open the envelopes, take out the letters, tear off the second sheet (which she threw onto the floor) and fold each letter up into a small square, separately; or, rather, she folded each one many times in squares; then she placed the five notes, folded, before her in a cluster on the table—her side of the table. The opening of the envelopes, tearing, folding, etc., were done in her lap, with the writing towards her, so that it was (she says) absolutely impossible for any human eye to read it. I have since assured myself that the pen, in writing the notes, did not leave an impression on the second sheet, thus showing that Keeler could not have read the notes from the sheets thrown onto the floor by Mrs. A. Mrs. A. declares that, to have seen the notes in her lap, even had she turned the writing the other way, would have required Keeler to look through the top of the table itself. After the notes had lain on the table for perhaps twenty minutes without any indication that any 'spirits' desired to answer them, it happened that Mrs. A. began to feel faint, as she had had a headache all the morning, and was complaining when she left home. She thereupon said that she was feeling sick, and asked if she might not move nearer to the windows. Mr. Keeler replied: 'I shall have to have you near the table—but I can move the table to the windows.' She thereupon gathered up the notes into her lap, while he picked up the table, with the slates still on it, and they went to the windows and sat down as before. After a few moments, as no manifestations occurred, Mr. K. reached over and picked up one of the notes (wads) and held it between his thumb and index finger directly in front of Mrs. A., above the table, saying that he could usually tell in that way whether the one to whom it was addressed was present and ready to communicate. He said that no one was present, evidently, and laid the note back with the rest. They sat a few minutes longer with no results, when he remarked that he had better write to his guide to get those people for him, or words to that effect. He thereupon wrote some characters on a slip of paper, folded it up, and placed it with the five notes. Just about this time, he had taken the slates from the paper in which I had wrapped them at home, looked on all four sides of them, to see that they were perfectly clean, and, without any attempt to get

them out of Mrs. A.'s sight, off the table or anywhere else, placed them in front of him. In about three minutes from the time he wrote the note to his guide he exclaimed: 'Here is somebody,' and, picking up a piece of slate-pencil, scrawled on the top slate, (they were still together): W. G——; and he inquired of Mrs. A., 'Did you write to him?' Receiving an affirmative answer, he then had her pick out the note to W. G——, and hold it in her hand separately. Scarcely could she do this before he exclaimed: 'Here is somebody else, A. B. C—— [giving a name]; 'is that one of them?'.....He then said: 'take hold of the slates, they are ready to write.' Mrs. A. then put all of the notes into her lap, still folded up. Mr. Keeler picked up the two slates, took a small sponge, and washed off the top slate, on which he had scrawled in very coarse letters the initials of the 'spirits,' exposed all four sides to Mrs. A.'s view; he then broke off a piece of slate pencil about one-eighth or one-fourth inch long (it being the kind of slate pencil that is covered with wood) laid it between the slates, snapped a rubber band around both slates, and shook the slates to make sure the pencil was free between them. The two then took hold of the four corners of the two slates and held them about eight inches above the top of the table. Mr. K., Mrs. A. observed, had on no cuffs, and his coat sleeves were pushed up towards the elbows; it was an ordinary house coat. Scarcely had the slates been held up before writing was heard going on inside the slates, with very considerable force, the t's being crossed, the i's dotted. Suddenly quite a loud tap came on one slate and the writing stopped. 'That side is full,' said Mr. Keeler. They then turned the slates over, and the writing began, as before. All of the writing was over in not more than five minutes from the time they held the slates in the air. During this time Mrs. A. watched Mr. Keeler's hands and declares that there was absolutely no muscular movement to be detected in them—that by no possibility could they have been moved along under the slates, as would have been required had any electric or magnetic contrivance been in use. That the writing, such as will presently be quoted and described by me, could have been produced by any object inserted between the slates, even had the medium's hands shown muscular movements, Mrs. A. declares to be simply preposterous—too silly to discuss. That she could have been hypnotized at any time during the sitting she regards as equally absurd."

The report concludes with a discussion of the messages, which were on the slates; but as that aspect of the problem does not interest us here, and as I am not at liberty to quote them in this place in any case, it would merely complicate the

problem to introduce that portion of the report. It is a very good report, and apparently places fraud beyond the bounds of possibility. In two subsequent letters to me, Mr. A. confirmed the statements to me contained in the original Report to Dr. Hyslop, and replied to some criticisms of mine. He also furnished details of some experiments even more marvellous than any contained in his own report, and which would seem to be quite beyond the bounds of trickery. Thus:

"A woman was here last night who told us of a slate-writing sitting which she had with Keeler. She is a pretty intelligent woman—about the average. She declares that she wrote some notes, sealed them in envelopes, and kept them in the envelopes and in her own hands, and received relevant answers to the notes on the slates. A Mr. M., who recently went from Washington to New York, told another reporter here (who told me) that he (M.) went to Keeler with five notes in his pockets, kept them there, and received answers to them on the slates. Captain H——,, tells us of still more marvellous things. He was for many years a thorough rationalist. He became acquainted with Keeler. He has had many slate-writings with him. I suggested to the Captain that possibly Keeler's sitters were in some way the victims of illusion. His reply to me was as follows: 'Doctor, if you go to Keeler and don't know that you haven't been fooled, then you don't know your wife when you see her.' I have been told this time and time again by very intelligent men and women. Captain H. told me of a remarkable automatic letter that K. got for him from the late Justice Bradley. Once Captain H.'s son thought to test Keeler. The son had a cigar store on Ninth Street, near the Avenue. A tuberculous fellow used to come in there, loaf and talk. He soon died. The son went to K. with various notes and a slate, in the usual way. But in addition, he wrote a note to his friend and put it in his vest pocket. Under his coat he put a small, clean slate, buttoning up the coat so as to both conceal and hold the slate in its position, and saying nothing to Keeler about the matter. Keeler's attention was of course taken up with the (as he had reason to suppose) ordinary slate-writing. The sitter got the usual results on the exposed slate, and departed. After he was out of Keeler's presence, he looked on the slate, and there was a message from his tuberculous friend. Captain H. is an intelligent man, and he certainly enjoys the respect and confidence of the residents of the District.

"I have read your book, and let me say that I am much pleased with it. I am forced to state, however, that, as you seem

to think yourself, there is nothing in it that will explain Keeler's slate-writings.* He is, as nearly as I am able to judge, far above the ordinary slate-writing medium—far above Slade and his like. He is constantly consulted by the most respectable and successful business men (so I am told) in the District, and he practically never fails to satisfy and completely dumbfound his sitters. He is as calm and unperturbed as a cucumber, they say. He has been doing these things for twenty-eight years, and declares he does not know how they are done.....”

Whatever we may think of the above narrative of facts, it is at all events evident that Keeler is a very remarkable man; and it is also evident that a careful investigation of his mediumship was called for and necessitated by reports such as the above. Keeler is a very touchy man, and must be approached with caution and humility—otherwise one finds himself turned out of doors with short ceremony. Having in mind such accounts as that given above, then; and at the same time remembering that I must keep my eyes open for fraud, should such exist, I entered Mr. Keeler's house in Lily Dale with high hopes that here, at least, I should meet with physical phenomena that were genuine, or at least such as I could not readily explain. I must say just here that Keeler is by far the cleverest man in his line I have ever come into contact with, in all my experience with the physical phenomena; but as to the rest, I leave my reports to speak for themselves.

Sitting with Pierre L. O. A. Keeler—For Slate-Writing.

August 5, 1907.

By appointment, I called on Mr. Keeler, and obtained a sitting. It was a sitting of great interest, in many respects, as we shall presently see, but conclusive of no results, one way or the other, for the following reason. I determined to let Keeler “run things” to suit himself, at this first sitting, and not impose any conditions or ask any tests—merely play-

* Before I had had an opportunity to obtain a sitting with Keeler, I too thought that nothing in my book explained his slate-writing; and indeed, his method is slightly different from anything I describe. I had written this in a letter to Mr. A.

ing the part of a green, unobservant spectator. For that reason, I disguised myself with a pair of smoked glasses—insinuating bad or defective eyesight—and of course gave my assumed name, Charles Henderson. Later on, I intended to ask for better test conditions—to examine the table; provide my own slates, etc.:—but for this séance I determined to let the medium impose his own conditions entirely, and to be as unobservant as possible, depending upon later sittings for conclusive results.

We entered the séance room, in the center of which, against the wall, was a table, about three feet square, covered with a cloth that hung down on all sides about six or eight inches. At least it hung down that distance on three sides of the table, but about a foot on the side nearest the medium. On the table were—a pile of four slates, a couple of slate pencils, a lead pencil, a sponge and cloth (for cleaning the slates), a couple of small pads of paper, and a box about six by eight inches square, and an opened letter. The two last mentioned are of no importance, however, and, I am convinced, played no part in the results. I must ask my reader to remember that box, however, as, although the medium did not employ it to trick me, I employed it in order to trick *him* at the next séance, as we shall presently see. But I anticipate.

The medium asked me if I had brought prepared questions with me. I replied in the negative. Keeler then pushed the small pad of paper and the lead pencil toward me, and requested me to write questions on these slips of paper. I did so; and the medium rose and went into the next room while I was writing them. I feel quite certain that he did not see the questions at that time. He soon came back, and took a seat opposite me at the table. As nearly as I can remember them, the four questions were as follows:

- (1) "Dear father; I should be very glad to hear your opinion of the book I am writing. Charles Henderson."
- (2) "Dear mother; will you tell me if you think Nell and I will be happy in our coming marriage? Charles Henderson."
- (3) "Dear mother; were you with me the other day in Chicago? I felt your presence very strongly on the street corner. Charles Henderson."

(4) "Dear sister; were you at the materializing séance the other night? Charles Henderson."

I wrote the first two of these slips of paper first, folded them in four, and handed them to the medium, who took them in his hands instantly, and proceeded to fold them up still more. While I was writing the second slip, Keeler was folding up the first, and there was nothing in the world to prevent him from substituting another pellet for mine at that time. I stopped after I had written the second pellet and watched Keeler fold it up—thus making sure there was no substitution. Keeler asked me if I did not want to ask more questions, and I at first replied in the negative. Keeler replied that I need not feel myself limited in the number of questions asked, and rather urged me to write more. Seeing that he was anxious for me to write more,—and so give him the opportunity to exchange the one I had just written—I took the pad and wrote the remaining two questions. The second slip had meanwhile been handed to Keeler, and it—or a dummy—placed on the table. During the writing of the third and fourth slips, the medium took another pad and lead pencil, and wrote something on a slip, folding it as I had folded mine, and placed it on the table beside them. By this time, I had finished writing my third and fourth slips, and handed them in turn to the medium, who folded them as he had folded the first two and his own. The third slip might have been substituted while I was writing the fourth, but I feel sure that the fourth was not exchanged at that time, as I had my eyes upon it. The *five* slips were now on the table, in a row—the four I had written, and the one written by the medium.

Keeler now asked me if I had written the *names* of the persons addressed on the slips of paper. I said I had not. He then requested me to do this, and I unfolded the slips in turn—finding the first to be the slip written by the medium to his guide,—asking him to bring the right spirits to the séance. The next was addressed to my father, and on this pellet I wrote Robert Henderson. The next two were addressed to my mother, and on these I wrote Jane Henderson.

The last was intended for my supposed sister, and on that I wrote Victoria Henderson. All the personages are, of course, fictitious. The slips were again folded up by the medium and placed on the table, as before. During this time, there was ample opportunity for the medium to open two or three of the four pellets, re-read the messages, and read the names. I did not watch the medium too closely, for the reason that I wished to appear as credulous as possible, and to give him all the latitude I could. The medium could have read the remaining one or two slips while I was cleaning the four slates on the table, which I was now requested to do. All this time the medium kept handling the pellets, but always at times when I was occupied in other ways, so that, had I not been on the watch for just this thing, I could not have told, very often, that he had touched the pellets at all. For instance, he would lean forward and say, "Now will you clean those four slates?" and in the instant the attention was diverted to the slates, the hand would drop down and an exchange of pellets be made. However, I hope to offer more than mere possibilities, before this Report is finished.

While I was cleaning the slates, the medium kept his right hand below the top of the table, sometimes both hands; and at other times held his hands above the table, and handled, idly, a broken pair of eye-glasses, which seemed to have no special use. The position of the hands, the head, the eyes, the constant looking down to the hands—whether above or below the table—the continued handling of the pellets—all rendered it perfectly obvious to me that he had substituted each in turn, and read their contents. There was nothing to prevent this supposition, and I feel confident, from what I observed, (his motions, etc.), that he *did* read the pellets in this manner. I am willing to undertake the reading of a like number of pellets myself, under similar conditions. In fact, I have done so, under much closer scrutiny than I employed. I think we may safely take it for granted, therefore, that the pellets were read in this manner, and the desired information gained. It but remains for us, therefore, to consider the slate-writing.

Until this time the four small slates I had cleaned re-

mained in a heap upon the table—to my left and the medium's right—and I feel quite sure that he had not touched them nor tampered with them in any way up to that time. Now, the medium took one of the slates (openly) and wrote upon it the letters "Vic." He held the slate out to me, and asked me if I knew anyone whose name began with those letters. I said that I recognized the appropriateness of the letters, which were the first three letters of one of the names on a slip lying on the table. The medium then erased this name, or rather, these letters, from the slate, and leaned back in his chair again, leaving the slate on the table, just in front of him. Before this had occurred, however, a considerable period of time had elapsed, in which nothing whatever happened. The medium leaned back in his chair, with half-closed eyes, and rocked to and fro, and I sat on the opposite side of the table, watching him. At least twenty minutes were occupied in this manner—waiting for the spirits to manifest—before the medium picked up the slate and wrote upon it in the manner described. During this waiting period, it would have been quite possible for Keeler to have written messages of considerable length upon duplicate slates, concealed in his lap, with a soft pencil; and I may say here that I distinctly *heard* such writing going on—a very faint scratching being audible, though it was nearly drowned by the outside noises, and the loud ticking of a clock in the room. It was only because I listened closely for the sound of this writing, and because my hearing is especially keen, that I was enabled to hear it; I shut out all other noises, as it were, and listened especially *for* that. In this way, I was enabled to hear the sound of a very soft slate pencil, softly scratching on the slate. During all this time, it will be remembered, the pile of four slates was on the table, undisturbed; the medium doubtless writing the messages on two duplicate slates, placed in his lap. I will say that the medium kept his right hand and arm below the surface of the table during the entire time, and looked down, into his lap, continuously. The light was on the medium's left, slightly behind him, and in the eyes of the sitter. The chair in which I sat was a *very low* rocker, the medium's chair being somewhat higher, but low

also. During the interval of waiting, the medium asked me several questions about myself, one of them being: "Did you attend that séance Saturday night?" I replied, "No." The significance of this question will be apparent when I remind the reader that my fourth question was, "Dear sister Victorla; Were you at the materializing séance the other night? Charles Henderson." If I could have said "yes," doubtless further tests would have been forthcoming.

But to return. We left the medium with one slate in front of him, upon the table, and near its edge. The medium now took another of the slates on the table, and wrote on it, the initials "R. H.," asking me if I recognized them. I replied that I did. Keeler then erased these initials also, and, picking up a rubber band, that was lying on the table, he passed it about both slates, which he had placed together, after first breaking off a small piece of slate pencil, and placing this between the two slates. All this time I had been watching the movements of the medium keenly, and at the moment that the operation was completed, the medium looked up quickly and caught my eyes, riveted upon the slates. I dropped them immediately, but it was too late. No attempt at exchange was made at that time. Instead, Keeler placed the two slates, fastened together as they were, on the center of the table, and stated that we should have to wait for some time yet, in order to receive communications. One of the pellets, containing one of my questions, was tucked under the rubber band, and the slates rested peacefully in the center of the table, on the top. Fully five more minutes elapsed, during which time Keeler leaned back in his chair, half closed his eyes, and again let his right hand fall in his lap. We entered into conversation, part of the time; and part of the time Keeler seemed to go to sleep, closing his eyes, apparently, though it was hard to see whether the eyes were really closed or not, owing to the light. They may have been (and probably were) looking downward into his lap. At the expiration of about five minutes, Keeler seized another slate, and wrote "hold" across it. He stated that this meant we were to hold the slates in our hands, and, picking up the slates himself, he proceeded to work off the rubber

band, binding them together. He then took the two slates apart. Next, he broke off a second piece of slate pencil, and placed it upon the lower slate; then picked up the other slate, and placed it on top of this lower slate, and proceeded to bind the two together again by means of the rubber band formerly employed. While engaged in placing the rubber band around the two slates the second time, Keeler asked me to pick out the note (from among those on the table) that contained the initials of the person last addressed. At this moment, and while I was busily engaged in selecting this note, Keeler's hand, containing the two slates, dipped into his lap, and beneath the surface of the table, for the merest fraction of a second,—coming up a moment later, still holding, apparently, the two slates I had just seen. As a matter of fact, however, he had, in that moment, *exchanged the two slates, originally held for two others in his lap*,—that had been prepared and written upon, during the sitting. These also contained pieces of slate pencil, and these also were fastened together by means of a rubber band. When they were brought up above the surface of the table, therefore, it was impossible to tell that they were not the slates just seen in his hands, *i. e.*, the unprepared slates containing no writing, whereas these slates were already full of messages. Of course I could not see this substitution, from the nature of things, and for that reason some of my readers may object to my construction of the observed facts, saying that fraud is in no wise proved by what I observed, but only rendered possible, and supposition is not proof. I quite see and sympathize with this viewpoint, and I should not think of claiming more than a possibility of fraud, as the result of this, my first sitting. As we shall presently see, however, I have conclusive proof that the slates actually *were* exchanged in this manner, and so I feel more at liberty to state dogmatically what did actually take place at this sitting. I shall describe the course of events, therefore, as they actually did transpire, being somewhat positive in my statements.

To return to the moment when the slates were brought up from the medium's lap, and the exchange completed. So far as the writing on the slates was concerned, it will be ob-

served that that was already there—the trick was done. But it would have disclosed the secret of the trick, would have been most inartistic, also, to display the writing at that time,—since “the spirits” had not written upon the slates at all, as yet! That part of the performance had yet to be gone through. Accordingly, the medium asked me to hold the slates with him, over the center of the table, and we held the slates between us in that manner. I heard (apparently) the scratching of the pencil between the slates,—the writing was proceeding. I expressed my delight. The illusion was perfect. I would not have believed that the sound could have been imitated so accurately and perfectly, had I not heard it; and had I not known that the medium was producing the sound by scratching on the under surface of the lower slate with his finger nail! * One could swear that the pencil, inside the slates, was doing the writing, *at first*; but, on listening very intently, I perceived that the sound more nearly resembled the scratching to and fro of a finger nail than the variable sound produced by a pencil in forming various letters. Only by a long and careful analysis of the sound, however, could this be distinguished. Still more conclusive evidence, however, is the following fact; I distinctly saw the tendons of the right wrist in constant movement—just as they are when one of the fingers is moved rapidly. This was proof positive to my mind that the sound was produced in that way. One further proof. If one rubs a slate with a finger nail, a white patch is left on the surface of the slate, and, if this is erased with the finger, a *very faint* white spot is left,—hardly distinguishable, except on close examination. Just such a spot I found on one of my slates when examining it at home, after the séance. It is pretty conclusively proved, therefore, that this was the method employed by the medium in order to produce the sound; and my theory was to receive further confirmation later on. Needless to say, when the slates were separated, the inside surfaces were found to be covered with writing—clean, neat and even. But as, on my theory, these

* See pp. 100-101 of my *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, for various methods of producing this sound by fraudulent means. The medium merely used his finger nail, I am convinced; see the Report, further on.

were written in a good light on the medium's lap; and as he had plenty of time to write what I received, that is not wonderful.* We come, therefore, to a consideration of the *Content* of the messages, and we shall now see whether the information given is suggestive of the supernormal.

When the two slates were taken apart, there were found four messages, three in ordinary slate pencil, and one in red chalk. There was no red pencil or chalk between the slates, so, if genuine, we should have to suppose that this writing had been "precipitated" on the slate—a *la* Madame Blavatsky. Besides these four messages, to be detailed presently—there was drawn a face. It was on one side of one of the slates, and was that of an elderly man—whom I do not recognize. It was very finely done, and looks as though it were powdered on the slate, rather than drawn on it. If the substitution postulated had been effected, however, this could have been printed on the duplicate slate, before the séance began, and was doubtless placed on the duplicate slate in the manner described in *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium*, pp. 145-7. The process is there described in detail, and is very ingenious. To turn, however, to the spirit messages. The first reads:

"Dear Charles; I am absent. I rejoice to be here. I will take an interest in the book and will give you my opinion later. I should like to talk about it with you in the séance. I am glad I can meet you in the same way. I am with your mother. Father, Robert Henderson."

This is in a good, bold, clear handwriting, occupying two-

* After my return, Dr. Hyslop and I went carefully through the writing on the slates, and compared the various hands. There are certain characteristics which would seem to point unmistakably to the fact that they were all written by the same person; but, even if they were not, that would prove nothing, as any member of his family might have written the messages for him. I was informed that his son writes the messages in various languages on the slates—with which Keeler himself is unfamiliar. But I have no proof of this. There is a certain systematic unity about the writings which is very remarkable, and illustrates the wonderful memory of sitters and of various handwritings that the medium must possess. In my own case, the handwriting was very similar, on all messages purporting to come from the same spirit,—and all very different, one from another.

thirds of the slate. Under it, in red chalk, is the following message:

"Dear Sir; I will help you in your literary efforts. Henry W. Longfellow."

This is in a fine, clear handwriting, the signature not being so unlike Longfellow's. It occupies the remainder of the slate.

Comments. So far as I know, there is no such person as Robert Henderson. Certainly it is not my father. My name is not Charles. The fact that "Longfellow" referred to my writing as "efforts," and places everything in the future, shows his complete ignorance of the fact that I had already written three books;—while Longfellow is the last person on earth to assist in my present book—a lengthy treatise on hygiene and diet!

Now as to the second slate. In a fine, clear handwriting is the following message:

"Dear Charles: I am like a stranger in a strange land at this sort of work. I do not just know how you were aware that I could be here with you at this time, but that man knew where to find me, to tell me that you were waiting here. It is all remarkable and strange, but I am glad we can meet. If you and Nell learn to bear and forbear you should be very happy. She is a sweet girl and is very fond of you. I was in Chicago. Dear Mother, Jane Henderson."

Comments. There is, so far as I know, no such person as Jane Henderson, certainly not my mother; and, as I said, my name is not Charles. The message indicates a lack of knowledge of the fact that "Nell" and I had been married some time. I have not been in Chicago since February, 1903, at which time my mother was still alive. I asked this question for the express purpose of trapping the medium, and he fell into the trap. The whole message is, therefore, false; while the language is stilted, stiff, and quite unlike that of my mother.

On the other half of the slate—occupying the space the face does not occupy (about seven-eighths)—is the following message:

"When you want to be near me don't go out in the graveyard and sit on my grave thinking you are near me. I am as far away from the cemetery as I can get. I have no affiliation for that resting place of an old lot of bodies that have been thrown aside as useless. Look for me in the séance room or at home. No-where else. If you can get out here to the séance Tuesday night, papa and I will meet you and talk and write on paper, in fact. I was at the materializing séance. Sister Victoria."

Comments. All the above message, to the words "I was ..." etc., are very general, and might apply to anyone. In fact, this criticism applies to almost all the messages obtained, and all of them might have been written before, leaving only a few words to be added at the end, in order to answer the sitter's question. In this particular instance, this supposition is strengthened by the fact that the writing fits snugly around the head, drawn on the slate, and was evidently fitted around it with some care. The passage about looking in the graveyard for the lost ones is very typical of this medium; and, before I left Lily Dale, I saw very much this same message on as many as six or seven slates. It is, therefore, a stock phrase with the medium. The last words of this message might have been written in during the séance. As to its content: At the time I visited Keeler the first time, I had been to no materializing séance; consequently my sister could not have appeared to me at any. Seeing that my name is not Henderson, and that I got the same name for my sister that I wrote on the pellet, (p. 44), the reader can imagine the source of the message.

Taking, then, these replies to my written questions, I think we shall be quite justified in thinking and asserting that "spirits" had nothing whatever to do with the writings, since names were signed that I do not recognize, of persons who never existed (so far as I know). On the theory that the pellets had been opened and read by the medium, however, all that transpired is intelligible enough, and is certainly the most rational theory to adopt.

There remains the theory—or the possibility—that "lying spirits" might have written the messages;—drawn to the séance by my unbelieving frame of mind, and palming them-

selves off as relatives of mine. I know that this is an explanation frequently offered by spiritualists to account for such blunders as I have described, and I am not going to say that such is an impossibility. But, if this were the case, why should they sign themselves by fictitious names instead of their real names, thus letting themselves fall into the trap, and making it perfectly patent that they were not the personages they claimed to be? But I have a far more forcible objection still, and I shall now state it, since it effectually disposes of this theory, as well of that which says that some force, under the control of the medium's subliminal, did the writing. It is this:

I carefully preserved the little bits of slate-pencil that Keeler had broken off, and a thorough, close examination revealed the fact that *they had not been used at all*. They were perfectly round, smooth, and fresh, just as they were broken off the pencil—the uneven edges, points, etc., still being there, and the gloss still being visible on the smooth sides. They could not have been used to write one single line,—far less the twenty-seven lines of close writing I received, as well as draw the face in such perfect detail. And further, how did the red writing come there—since there was no red pencil or chalk between the slates? Was it “precipitated?” I noticed that Keeler laughed when he saw the red writing—I presume because he had forgotten to put the bit of red pencil between the slates; but he evidently thought me “green” enough to swallow anything. It was not “complimentary!”

I know that many persons have found that their pencils are much worn after the writing has taken place. In such cases, the medium simply placed between the slates a piece of slate pencil that was worn, in the first instance; and, when they were separated, at the conclusion of the sitting, it was naturally found worn also. No one thinks of examining the slate-pencil *before* it is placed between the slates, nor does the medium suggest such an examination. Even if it were made, a simple exchange could be afterwards effected.

I asked for a sitting the next day; I was much impressed and delighted; in fact, I should be glad of a sitting every day that week! But nothing definite could be arranged. All I

could do was to go at another time and ask for another sitting as soon as possible. This I did, and eventually obtained one. But it will be seen that my first sitting was in itself quite inconclusive one way or the other. Certainly the slate-writing could not be claimed as genuine, since it bore too many characteristics of being fraudulently produced, and in fact appeared to me to prove fraud quite conclusively,—though I am willing to admit that this impression may not be conveyed to every reader, who is less familiar with fraud and its possibilities than myself. And I should certainly not contend that Keeler is proved to be a fraud on that evidence alone. That would be most unfair to him, and I do not wish to treat any of the evidence in that summary way. I determined to wait further developments before coming to any conclusion, one way or the other. That could only be arrived at by having a second sitting, and most closely watching the medium, and actually *detecting* the process of fraud in operation, if possible. I might bait certain traps, and let the medium fall into them, if he would; and in that way I might definitely prove Keeler to be a fraud, or the reverse. That I determined to do. I could arrive at no definite conclusion, as the result of my first sitting, for the reason that fraud was not actually detected, in spite of the evidences that it was practised, and I did not feel justified in asserting that such was the case. All the actions of the medium, however; his methods of distracting attention, as well as the fact that it might have been possible for the medium to exchange the slates at the times indicated—all point to the fact that fraud was actually practised, and I felt that I knew almost exactly the method which the medium pursued. However, both Dr. Hyslop and myself have always contended that because such and such a manifestation might have been produced by fraud, it is no *evidence* that it was actually so produced, unless external evidence be forthcoming, and that had not as yet been produced, in Keeler's case. Accordingly I determined to get it, if possible, at a later séance.

Let me give, just here, a résumé of the method I think the medium pursued on this occasion—for I do not for one minute doubt that Keeler uses different methods on various occasions, and very rarely the same method for the same sitter on

two occasions. In my book, I have, I believe, pointed out fifty-three different methods of obtaining slate-writing by fraudulent means, and I have learned as many as twenty-five or thirty methods since, so that it will very easily be seen that to trap the unwary sitter is no hard task. But the method I believe Keeler used at this, my first sitting with him, was this. The pellets were exchanged one by one and read by the medium, so as to obtain the names, and the contents of the slips. These pellets were then replaced on the table, and the answers to the questions written on two duplicate slates concealed in the medium's lap. A rubber band was then passed around these two slates. The medium then picked up first one slate and then another, scrawling initials across them, and leaving them in front of him on the table. He then picked up these slates, and proceeded to place a rubber band about them, in which act his hand dipped below the surface of the table for a second, and these two slates were exchanged for the two prepared slates upon which was the writing. This act of exchanging the slates was concealed by the fact that the medium, at that very time, requested the sitter to pick out the slip of paper on which was written the message to the last person mentioned, *i. e.*, the person whose initials were last written on the slate, by the medium. This distracted the attention of the sitter, for the moment, and during that moment, the exchange was effected. It remained for me, therefore, (1) to watch the medium at that moment most carefully; (2) to obtain definite proof of the exchange of paper pellets; and (3) to obtain definite proof of exchange of slates by the medium. I accordingly prepared to obtain these proofs at the next séance—with what success the reader will observe.

In thinking over this sitting, and in writing these notes, I have been struck most forcibly with the frailty of human memory and of the utter worthlessness of human testimony to phenomena of this character. Even now [at the time of writing out the sitting] I can not recall distinctly all the events that transpired at that sitting—their sequence, and precise order. I cannot remember, *e. g.*, how many times Keeler picked up and handled the paper pellets; whether I

looked at the under surface of the top slate, when they were put together, etc. In slate-writing manifestations, far more than in any others—these details are important to remember, and as difficult to remember as they are important. It is next to impossible for the average person to write out a correct account of a slate-writing séance, on his return home,—though he may be able to write out a perfectly accurate account of a materializing or trumpet séance, etc. Of course I was not watching Keeler as closely as I might have watched him, for the reasons given above; but it must be remembered that I knew about the method Keeler was to employ; knew how he opened and read the pellets; knew how and when he wrote upon the slates; how and when he might have exchanged these slates for those upon the table; I have even performed the same test myself for friends, upon occasion;—*and yet* I cannot call to mind all his movements with distinctness,—even knowing all this. Of how much value is the testimony of the average man or woman, therefore, who is ignorant of trickery, and knows nothing whatever of the methods employed?

Summing up the sitting, I think we may assert, with confidence, that “spirits” had nothing to do with the results observed, since there were no such persons as I addressed. Many other facts indicate clearly that fraud would alone account for the whole sitting, and would be the most rational theory to adopt upon the evidence presented. It but remained for further facts to sustain, and in fact confirm, that view of the case.

Sitting with P. L. O. A. Keeler—For Slate-writing.

August 7, 1907.

According to appointment, I paid my second visit to Keeler this afternoon, my prime object being to verify or to refute the theories of the *modus operandi* that I had formulated in my mind upon my first visit. This time, I prepared four slips of paper, before going to the séance, writing upon them the following questions:—

(1) "Dear Sister Victoria; Our former friend, Mrs. Young, of Chicago, is going to sit for development. Do you remember her? If so, will you assist her? Your loving brother, Charles Henderson."

(2) "My dear Jimmie Robinson; You ought to be able to come here, as you came and spoke through the trumpet the other day. You *were* there, weren't you? I still think of you; and remember your old chum—Charles Henderson."

(3) "Dear Mother (Jane Henderson); You materialized for me last night.* You were much changed, though I think I recognized you. Your consumption wasted you much, did it not? Your loving son, Charles."

(4) "Dear Father (Robert Henderson); Brother Bob wants to sell your old house in Chicago. Would you advise this? Your loving son, Charles."

These four questions I wrote on paper that crackled a great deal when handled—folded and refolded, etc.—and folded them into small squares, about half-an-inch in size. I numbered these 1, 2, 3, 4, respectively, on the outside of the folded slips. These I took with me to the sitting, and placed them in the center of the table, between us. Keeler then asked me to clean the pile of five slates that stood on the table to my left and his right. I proceeded to do so, and as I was busy cleaning them, Keeler leaned over the table, and commenced handling the slips, as on the previous occasion. While pretending to clean my slates, I kept one eye on him, and distinctly saw him exchange two pellets, one after the other. These pellets he held in the palm of his right hand, which he then dropped carelessly into his lap. A few seconds later I heard the crackle of my slips of paper, as they were being opened. Glancing up at Keeler, I saw his eyes were riveted upon his lap—evidently busily engaged in reading my pellet. Several times I looked up, and each time I saw Keeler looking intently into his lap. When I had finished cleaning the four slates, I stacked them together, at the left of the table, and waited.

I soon heard the crinkle of my paper again, and soon after that the faint sound of a pencil scratching on a slate. Keeler

* This referred to the incident, mentioned on p. 29, as I had attended that séance the evening before.

looked down persistently, his hands being busily engaged in his lap; the whole process was so patent, so obvious and so brazen that I marvelled at such audacity. It is true that Keeler looked up and about frequently, and frequently let his right hand rest on the table; but for fully fifteen minutes, both of Keeler's hands were below the table, and the greater part of that time his eyes were directed downward to his lap—almost closed, as though entranced or asleep. The sound of writing was clearly distinguishable by me a good part of this time. Once, after about five minutes, Keeler leaned over the table and handled the pellets. I saw him exchange another pellet, replacing the two he had already taken at the commencement of the séance. This was repeated at the end of another five minutes or so, when the medium exchanged the fourth pellet, and brought back the third one. Soon after this, Keeler suddenly seized one of the pellets, and tore it into five or six pieces, and threw them aside, saying; "that pellet does not belong here"—though the person to whom it was addressed "might write, just the same." Again, I heard the paper being opened, and shortly afterwards refolded; and again I saw Keeler looking down into his lap and heard the scratching of the slate pencil, as it wrote the answer to my fourth question. I could not but marvel at the audacity of the man, calmly sitting there, across the table, and literally forging messages from the spirit world! Evidently my apparent credulity had convinced him that there was nothing to fear; and, what with his relaxing his precautions to some extent, on that account, and partly because I knew just what to look for and observe, I could follow the whole process of his writing from first to last. But I anticipate.

Soon after this, my fourth slip was replaced on the table, and Keeler wrote a note to his spirit guide, as follows: "Geo. Christy. Bring these people. K." It was written on a small piece of paper, before me, torn off the pad, and placed upon the table beside the other slips, after being carefully folded. Keeler did not attempt at any time to mix this slip with the others, nor exchange it for them, however; he merely tossed it onto the table carelessly, where it remained, beside the others,—being distinguished from them by the

color of the paper. It was darker than any of the other slips, and could not have been substituted for them. It was purely for effect.

During all this time, in which my slips were being opened and read, and the answers thereto written on slates in Keeler's lap, I had been playing with a lead pencil and a rubber band—apparently to fill up the time, but really for another purpose, or I should say for two other purposes. (1) It enabled me to keep my eyes employed and make Keeler feel greater freedom in all his movements and actions,—allowing me to watch him for long periods of time, in reality, and to see that his eyes were constantly fixed upon his lap; and (2) it enabled me to turn over the torn pieces of paper on the table with the point of my pencil, and carefully examine each piece in turn. Let me explain. The rubber band was resting on the table-top, and I played with this rubber band with my pencil point, pressing upon the side of the band, and making it jump from one place to another. Then, with the point of the pencil, I was enabled to turn over, idly, the four pellets that were upon the table, and examine them carefully—for the numbers upon them, etc. Turning over one of these slips, then, I looked for the number of the slip, written in pencil, which I had placed there, before the séance. I found that it was marked number 1. On again looking at the three slips in the center of the table, I saw that they were numbered 1, 3, 4. The number on the torn slip, therefore, should have been 2, while in reality it was 1,—clearly showing that *another* piece of paper had been torn up, after being marked by Keeler, in imitation of my marks, and thrown aside. What Keeler had done, in other words, was this. Seeing that my slips were all marked, Keeler had numbered his duplicates also, so that the duplicate slips deposited on the table by him should look precisely like those I had prepared, a number being written on each. This Keeler had done in his lap, before substituting for my slips. On tearing up my slip, however, one of his—or a part of one of his—had got substituted by mistake, and so there were now two slips on the table labelled “1,” and none labelled “2.” Substitution had most certainly been effected. Of course Keeler did

not see me turning over and critically examining all the slips of paper on the table, for that would have aroused his suspicion at once, and it is probable that I should have got no further results. No, I had to proceed much more carefully, and in a more circuitous manner. The reader will remember the small box on the left hand side of the table, apparently placed there for no especial purpose. I determined to make use of this to trick the medium, or at least to ascertain if he had endeavored to trick me. I continued to play with the rubber band and the lead pencil, flicking the band about from place to place on the table; and finally, as though to change the monotony of the process, I left the rubber band, and flicked the torn pieces of paper (the pieces of the torn slip) about the table, and finally managed, after some manoeuvring, to get them behind the box on the table. In that position, they were hidden from the medium, though close to me. I then went back to the rubber band, playing with it for some time, with my pencil, and finally managed to get that, too, behind the box on the table. I then followed it with my pencil, and had the opportunity of turning over and carefully examining all the pieces of paper on the table, while the movements of my pencil, to one who could not see its point, would but indicate that I was still playing with the rubber band on the table. In this manner, I could examine, more or less at leisure, both sides of the slips of paper on the table; and I then ascertained that there were two slips bearing the number 1, and none bearing the number 2. It was clear, therefore, that substitution had been effected. I took away all these slips—whole and torn—with me, at the conclusion of the séance, and have them still. Before proceeding to the slate-writing, therefore, I shall give the remaining details concerning these incriminating slips.

Slips 1, 3 and 4 are whole and sound. They are the slips I wrote. The torn slip, (which should have been number 2), on being patched together, showed the following peculiarities. It is composed of five torn pieces,—four of which are a part of my original slip, and read consecutively, when patched together. The fifth torn piece is blank, and does not fit onto the torn edge, as it should, and bears on its back,

or rather on one side, the figure 1 instead of 2. It is evidently part of *another* slip,—a dummy pellet—accidentally torn off and accidentally substituted by Keeler for the remaining or fifth piece of my pellet. Instead of the message being finished, it is broken off, and left, *minus* the bottom line,—while I have a blank piece of paper, numbered wrongly; and I do not doubt that Keeler now has the piece of paper I should have received, bearing the remainder of my question on one side, and the number 2 on the other. I ask;—could evidence be more conclusive that this pellet of paper had been substituted for another, and that fact afterwards revealed through this fortunate accident? For my part, I think the evidence absolutely conclusive.

Let us now turn to the slate-writing. During the process of the writing, I repeatedly saw Keeler put his hand into his vest pocket, and, watching him on such occasions, I saw that he was calmly extracting small pieces of slate pencil, and using such pencil to write upon the slates that were in his lap! At the conclusion of the last writing, Keeler's hands went to his pocket, and then both hands seemed to be busily engaged in his lap. What they were doing there I shall state presently.

Immediately after this, Keeler announced that there was some one present who desired to write. He took one slate off the top of the stack (the first time he had touched the slates) and wrote "R. H." on it. Keeler held out the slate to me and asked me if I recognized the initials as a relative of mine. For the moment, I quite forgot the fact that I was there as Charles Henderson, and that these were the initials of my supposed father, and I had Richard Hodgson in mind, whose initials—R. H.—were familiar to me. To the question whether this was a relative, then, I said "no," but immediately corrected myself, and stated that these were the initials of some one whose name appeared on one of the slates. I think that for the moment, the medium's suspicions were aroused, as he looked at me sharply, but I assumed such a naive, innocent expression (apparently) that he calmed down, and proceeded with the séance. Keeler then deposited this slate on the table, in front of him, erased the initials,

reached over and took another slate from the stack, and wrote "JIM" across it. He asked me if I knew to whom that referred. I said "yes;" and Keeler thereupon laid this slate on the table, beside the other, and erased the word. He then broke off a small piece of slate pencil, and offered me the two slates that were on the table in front of him to examine. I did so, carefully noting certain peculiarities about them; and at the same time I secretly pressed my thumb nail deeply into the frame of each slate, so as to identify it, without the mark becoming visible. I then handed the two slates back to Keeler. He took them, placed a rubber band around them, asking me at the same moment to pick out the slip on the table, containing the message to the person whose initials he last wrote upon the slate. As I was doing this, and was busy finding and reading my slip, I distinctly saw Keeler's hands dip beneath the table-top, out of my sight, and come up a second later into view again,—still apparently holding the two slates. In that moment Keeler had exchanged the two slates upon the table for the two in his lap, upon which were written the answers to my questions. I clearly saw the substitution; and it then became evident that what Keeler was doing with his two hands in his lap just before the writing began, was to place a similar rubber band around the two slates in his lap, so that, when the substitution was effected, they should exactly resemble the two I had examined, and that were fastened together in that way. I forgot to mention, also, that, several times, when rocking to and fro, while writing upon the slates held in his lap, these slates had knocked against the table several times; and I clearly heard their frames strike against the table-leg. Keeler moved uneasily in his chair, on each occasion, in order to cover up the sound made by this accident.

The two slates on which the writing was to appear—in reality the two on which my messages were already written—were now held by us over the center of the table, and the sound of writing was clearly audible. I watched Keeler's wrists, and again saw the tendons working, showing that he was scratching on the under side of the lower slate with his finger. I may add that, as Keeler is a very stout man, and as

his wrists are well covered with fatty-tissue, it is very difficult to detect this movement; but, by watching intently, I clearly saw it—corresponding to the scratches on the slate. After a time, the slates were separated, and were found covered with writing. I give the messages below. First, I must state, however, that the piece of pencil I again examined, and once more found it to be quite unworn—fresh, new, and a pencil that certainly could not have been used to write more than a few words at most. I received twenty-five lines of writing, besides several lines in red and yellow. Neither a red nor a yellow pencil was placed between the slates. The red and yellow lines alternated, the yellow being in a regular hand, and the red being in mirror-writing—very badly done. There were five lines of this red and yellow writing. There was also drawn upon the slate a cartoon of a man in a silk hat and frock coat—this being beside the message from “Jimmy Robinson.” My impression is that, even the ordinary writing could not possibly have been produced by the clear and unworn pencil I afterwards found between the slates.*

I now turn to the messages. The one in red and yellow chalk, when read by the aid of a mirror, was as follows:

(1) “Why, good heavens, I can come, of course. Don’t you see me? I am, as ever truly, Jaimmie Robinson.”

Comments. It will be noted that the Christian name is misspelled, as though the medium had started to write “James,” and corrected it afterwards. “Jimmie Robinson” is a fiction—only existent since my last visit to Lily Dale. It will be observed that any answer to the question is studiously avoided.

(2) On the other slate is the following message:

“Dear Charley; Do not think you have been forgotten by an old friend, for I am often with you, watching and guiding over you, and I see nothing but sunshine and happiness before. I do

* When I got home again, I carefully examined these pieces of pencil through a magnifying glass, and the result of this examination was to confirm my former beliefs in every detail. I also asked Dr. Hyslop to examine the pencils through the glass, and his opinion precisely coincides with my own. These pencils could not have done the writing.

not mean by that that your path is strewn by flowers, but the way looks generally clear for you. In materialization, one necessarily forms from the medium. The same, even in another life. Dear Mother, Jane Henderson."

Comments. No such person exists, so far as I know. My question was again avoided, and a general answer given, all of which might have been prepared before the sitting. Is it probable that a mother would refer to herself as "an old friend" when speaking to her son?

(3) The third message is this:

"Charlie; as the old saying is 'carry the news to Mary,' so I say now, I want everyone who cares at all about me to know that I am quite myself, and most contented and happy in my spirit life. I never want to come back to earth life to remain. I do not, in my sudden moment of coming, just think whether I remember Miss Brown or not. I remember Zilda Brown. I will gladly help any one develop. Sincerely, Victoria."

Comments. The remark "carry the news to Mary" has no meaning for me, and was probably thrown out on chance, as a possible "test." Seeing that there is no one living who remembers or even saw the sister whom I call Victoria—she dying soon after birth—her communication rather lacks pertinence; but her lack of memory in this direction is more than counterbalanced by her extraordinary memory in another. She remembers Zilda Brown (who never existed) and yet she died when only a few days old! Phenomenal child! But her memory is not perfect, either, since she refers to Miss Brown while my slip referred to Mrs. Young. How did any one with such an extraordinary memory make so obvious an error—when the message was actually before her? It is as baffling as the telepathic hypothesis in the Piper case! But does it not indicate, rather, that Keeler read the slip, and then mis-remembered the name, in writing the answer to the question on the slate? Is not that a far more thinkable and rational hypothesis?

(4) The fourth message runs as follows:

"Charles: This is not so very much of a letter, but it will do to show you that I am alive and able to be with you. There is

no death, and I thank heaven there is not. I never felt more alive than I do at this moment. It is of no concern to me now what is said by anyone of you. I am out of it all. Robert Henderson."

Comments. What an altruistic spirit! He must be *very* far advanced in spirit life—whoever he is! It will be observed that the answer to my question is again avoided, and the message is of such a character that it might have all been on the slate before the séance, except the last few words.

I now come to the final and most conclusive proof of all,—that the writings were obtained fraudulently; and that the slates were substituted for others, bearing the messages, at a convenient moment. While cleaning the stack of slates on the table, I had done so apparently carelessly, and in an off-hand manner. But, as before stated, I had observed these slates very carefully, and noted their peculiarities—various marks upon the frames, slates, etc., and had also secretly marked the frames of the slates with my thumb nail. Now, when I finally separated the two slates on which the messages were written, I found them to be *two entirely different slates* from any that I had cleaned. The slate itself, on both of these, was flecked throughout with tiny, white marks—hair-lines; whereas not one of the five slates I had cleaned (and that were originally on the table) contained these marks. I am quite positive on that point. The texture of the slate was also different. In both cases, the frames of these slates *contained no mark of my thumb-nail*,—thus showing that they were not those I had previously examined; and further, the frame of one of these slates was badly joined at the corner; it did not fit snugly, and a portion of the binding-wire (running round the outside of the slate-frames, and holding them together) was visible. This was not the case in any of the five slates I had examined in the first place. There is conclusive proof, therefore, that the two original slates had been substituted for others; and, since I had also been enabled to follow the whole process throughout, and had seen every step, I think I am justified in contending that the slate-writings, obtained through the mediumship of Keeler were fraud-

ulent throughout—at least so far as my own sittings were concerned. But since Keeler must have practised this process times without number, in order to arrive at the degree of ease and dexterity with which the whole process was performed—to attain such perfection in the art of deception, in fact—I think we may safely infer that it will require very strong evidence indeed, coming from competent observers, to convince us that the slate-writings obtained through Keeler's mediumship are genuine,—or that anything he has presented in the past has been genuine either. Inasmuch as this medium has been exposed on more than one occasion—both at Lily Dale, if I am informed correctly, and on other occasions, the medium's reputation is not good enough to warrant our belief in his mediumship, unless further and very strong evidence be forthcoming. In order to further substantiate these claims, however, let me give, just here, and before proceeding, one or two of these cases, in which this medium has been exposed, or his mediumship gravely suspected, in order to sustain and fortify my statements, and the attitude I have taken towards this famous medium.

While at Lily Dale, I was told an incident about Keeler that seemed to be pretty common property there, as many persons knew of it, and there seemed to be no wish to conceal the facts. It is this: One day a party of twenty sceptical railroad men came to Keeler for a slate-writing, on the condition that they (all of them) would be allowed to sit round the room wherever they saw fit. Keeler agreed to this, on the understanding that they paid him \$5.00 each for the sitting. They sat an hour and more, and received no messages whatever—not a trace of writing on any of the slates did they receive. They then demanded their money back, but Keeler refused to refund one penny. There was a general rumpus, which ended by referring the matter to the official board of Lily Dale, who caused Keeler to refund the money promptly. Of course this is no proof of fraud on the medium's part, but serves to indicate the character of the men with whom we have to deal; and seems to indicate also, that, whenever strict test conditions are imposed, no writing is obtained. While I can quite see why it is that a sceptical temper of mind might

offset the occurrence of many psychical phenomena, I could never see why it is that the conditions invariably demanded at a slate-writing séance are *just such as to render fraud possible*,—unless it is to practice fraud. And until phenomena be forthcoming, which are not open to this objection, I do not think we are warranted in thinking that anything but fraud has been employed.

As before stated, I am not alone in my opinion that Keeler is not to be trusted for genuine phenomena; several other persons have detected the *modus operandi* of his slate-writing, as well as myself. The best case of the kind I know is that recorded by Mr. Henry Ridley Evans, in his book *Hours With the Ghosts* [now, *The Spirit World Unmasked*], in which he details a sitting of his with Keeler, and describes the trick, as he detected it,—which explanation almost exactly corresponds to mine. I shall quote from his book, which lies open before me, the passages that directly bear upon this question of the method that Keeler pursued, in his slate-writing tests. After describing the preliminary preparations, Mr. Evans goes on:—

“I was ushered into a small, back parlor by the medium who closed the folding doors. We were alone. I made a mental photograph of the surroundings. There was no furniture except a table and two chairs placed near the window. Over the table was a faded cloth, hanging some eight or ten inches below the table. Upon it were several pads of paper and a heterogeneous assortment of lead pencils. Leaning against the mantelpiece, within a foot or so of the medium's chair, were some thirty or forty slates.

“‘Take a seat,’ said Mr. Keeler, pointing to a chair. I sat down, whereupon he seated himself opposite me, remarking as he did so, ‘have you brought slates with you?’

“‘I have not,’ was my reply.

“‘Then, if you have no objection,’ he said, ‘we will use two of mine. Please examine these slates, wash them clean with this damp cloth, and dry them.’ With that he passed me two ordinary school slates, which I inspected closely, and carefully cleaned.

“‘Have you prepared any slips with the names of friends, relatives, or others, who have passed into spirit life, with questions for them to answer?’

“‘I have not,’ I replied.

" 'Kindly do so, then,' he answered, 'and take your time about it. There is a pad on the table. Please write but a single question on each slip. Then fold the slips and place them on the table.' I did so.

" 'I will also make one,' he continued, 'it is to my spirit control, George Christy.' He wrote a name on a slip of paper, folded it, and tossed it among those I had prepared, passing his hand over them and fingering them, saying, 'It is necessary to get a psychic impression of them.' We sat in silence several minutes.

" After a while Mr. Keeler said: 'I do not know whether or not we shall get any responses this afternoon, but have patience.' Again we waited. 'Suppose you write a few more slips,' he remarked, 'perhaps we'll have better luck. Be sure and address them to people who were old enough to write, before they passed into spirit life.' This surprised me, but I complied with his wishes. While writing, I glanced furtively at him from time to time; his hands were in his lap, concealed by the table cloth. He looked at me occasionally, then at his lap, fixedly. I am satisfied that he opened some of my slips, having adroitly abstracted them from the table in the act of fingering them.

" He directed me to take my handkerchief and tie the two slates tightly together, holding the slates in my hands, as I did so. I laid the slates on the table before me, and we waited. 'I think we will succeed this time in getting responses to some of the questions. Let us hold the slates.' He grasped them with fingers and thumbs at one end, and I at the other in like manner, holding the slates about two inches above the table. We listened attentively, and soon was heard the scratching noise of a slate pencil moving upon a slate. The sound seemed directly under the slate, and was sufficiently impressive to startle any person making a slate test for the first time, and unacquainted with the multifarious devices of the sleight-of-hand artist.

" 'Hold the slates tightly, please,' said Mr. Keeler, as a convulsive tremor shook his hands. I grasped firmly my end of the slates, and waited further developments. The faint tap of a slate pencil upon a slate was heard, and the medium announced that the communications were finished. I untied the handkerchief, and turned up the inner surfaces of the slates. Upon one of them several messages were written, and signed....."

[After giving the communications on the slates, and stating, that, as a result of a careful examination of the writing upon them, he was forced to the conclusion that Keeler wrote them all with his own hand, the account goes on:]

" The imitation of a pencil writing upon a slate was either made by the apparatus, described in the séance with C——, in the first part of this chapter; or by some other contrivance; more than likely by simply scratching with his finger on the under sur-

face of the slate. While my attention was absorbed in the act of writing my second set of questions, he prepared answers to two of my first set, and substituted a prepared slate for the cleaned slate on the table. I was sure he was writing under the table; I heard the faint rubbing of a soft bit of pencil upon the surface of a slate. His hands were in his lap and his eyes were fixed downwards. Several times I saw him put his fingers into his vest pockets, and he appeared to bring up small pieces of something, which I believe were bits of white and colored crayons used in writing the messages. His quiet audacity was surprising.

"In the séance with Mr. Keeler, I subjected him to no tests. He had everything his own way. I should have brought my own marked slates with me and never let them out of my sight for an instant. I should have subjected the table to a close examination, and requested the medium to move, or rather myself removed, the collection of slates against the mantel, placed so conveniently within his reach. I did not do this, because of his well-known irascibility. He would probably have shown me the door and refused a sitting on any terms, as he had done to many sceptics. I was anxious to meet Keeler, and preferred playing the novice rather than not get a slate test from one of the best known and most famous of modern slate-writing mediums."

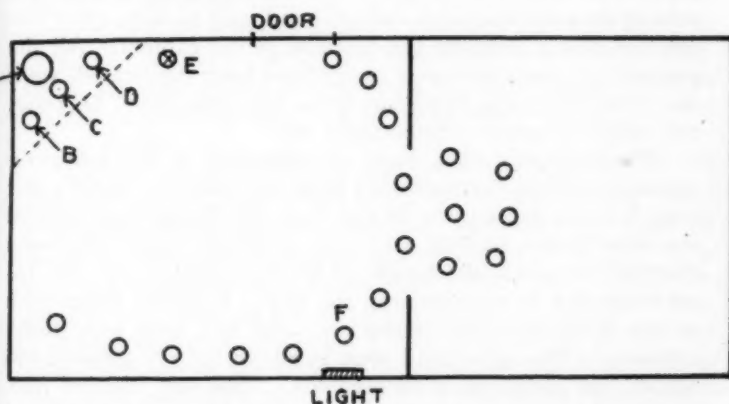
It will be seen that, in all essential points, Mr. Evans' descriptions tally with my own, and the minor points that indicate tricky methods on Keeler's part were noticed by him as they were by myself. It is unfortunate that Mr. Evans did not obtain a series of sittings with Keeler, and note the results, as, although his sitting strongly indicates fraud, it does not *prove* it, and I was determined that I should secure definite proof of fraud, or else record the fact that such was merely my opinion. But, having before us the clear indications of substitution of pellets, substitution of slates, etc., secured in my sittings, what are we to conclude but that fraud is the explanation of all the slate-writing tests that Keeler offers his sitters, or the so-called phenomena observed through his mediumship? I think that this supposition is confirmed by the fact that a third sitting was refused me—for no good reason, so far as I could see—except that the medium had begun to have some faint idea that I was there to detect him in trickery, if possible, and he was afraid of exposure. At all events, I was refused my third sitting, and had to go away, content with the two I had already been

granted. Fortunately, these were enough to prove the case against Keeler—as I think any candid student of the reports will admit.

Séance with Pierre L. O. A. Keeler—For Materialization and Physical Phenomena.

August 10, 1907.

About fifteen persons, besides myself, were present at this séance, which had been promised me several days before—I having purchased a ticket in advance. Had I not done so, it is probable that I should not have been admitted at all. The present séance was divided into two parts: physical manifestations proper, (playing of musical instruments, writing upon pieces of paper, etc.,) and trumpet speaking. The same cabinet was used for both séances, and I give a diagram of the room herewith.



On the small table, A., were placed the various musical instruments. The medium sat at D., while two persons from the circle sat at B. and C. A woman who attended to the details of the séance (I think the medium's daughter, but I am not sure of this) sat at E., ready to hand over the curtains of the cabinet the musical instruments, to receive slips of paper upon which had been written spirit-messages, etc.

My own position was at F., the light being almost directly above me. The person sitting at C. was a lady—on very familiar terms with the medium; while a gentleman sat at B. The medium then grasped the lady's left arm with both his hands, the left hand grasping the wrist, the right hand grasping the arm further up, near the elbow. The gentleman at B. grasped her right wrist with his left hand, his right hand being outside the cabinet curtains, and visible to all. A curtain was now drawn in front of the three, and made snug about their necks, their heads only being visible. This was done by the lady at E. The lights were now lowered, and the séance began.

It would be useless for me to repeat or enumerate all the phenomena that occurred at this séance. Bells were rung; the tambourine thumped; the guitar thrummed, and waved about in the air; messages were written on the sheets of paper, and then torn off and thrown over the curtains of the cabinet by a visible hand—which hand, and an arm, were frequently thrust through the curtains of the cabinet. All the phenomena observed could easily have been duplicated, were the medium's right hand but free—the bells could be rung, the tablets of paper written upon, etc.

The medium's right hand was liberated in the following manner. When the medium's hand encircled the sitter's left arm, it contained a piece of soft lead, this being bent around the sitter's arm, so that, when the medium's right hand was carefully removed, the weight of the lead would leave the impression of a hand encircling the arm. It is the same trick as the Eddy Brothers performed, and has been repeatedly exposed. The right hand once freed, all the phenomena observed can easily be accounted for. (See my *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, pp. 193-95.) The blocks of paper that were placed on the table were not examined before the séance began, and might have been (and undoubtedly were) prepared before the séance, and contained all the messages that the various sitters received. These messages contained nothing evidential, and were weak and trivial in all cases. I give the two received by me, by way of illustration. They

are written in the same hand, in each case, as appeared on the slates received by me. They are:

- (1) "I am not lost to you, Robert Henderson."
- (2) "I send love, I am in here, Jane Henderson." ["In here" means in the cabinet.]

It will be seen that my *soi-disant* and fictitious father and mother again communicated. Many of the messages were mere scrawls, and these were *seen* to be written by certain privileged sitters, who were invited to look over the cabinet curtains, during the manifestations. They asserted that they saw a hand writing the messages; but such messages were invariably so badly written as to be altogether undecipherable. When the hand was thrust through an opening in the curtains—as sometimes happened—a coat sleeve and cuff were visible—as happened in the case of the notorious "Rev." Hugh Moore, at a séance of his that I attended. In view of the fact that fraud could be so easily perpetrated, and that many of the occurrences actually indicated that such was the case, we may certainly assume that fraud was actually practised; and that spirits had nothing whatever to do with the manifestations that occurred in the cabinet, during this part of the séance.

Twice, during the sitting, raps were heard in the opposite end of the room, on the wall, and a very loud, cracking sound was heard, which exactly resembled a sound that would be made by snapping an elastic against the wall of the room, to which some heavy object had been attached. This rubber might have been in the next room, and undoubtedly was. The raps might also have been made by someone in the next room, rapping on the wall of the séance room. The walls of the room were thin, and of wood. I looked for Mrs. Keeler, but she was nowhere to be seen. Why was Mrs. Keeler absent? Where was she, and what was she doing all this time? I should very much like to have those questions answered.

The second part of the séance was devoted to trumpet speaking,—the lights being lowered so that the medium's head became a faint spot of white, even this being invisible a good part of the time. The two former sitters were removed,

one chair was taken away, and an old gentleman was requested to take a seat within the cabinet,—one whom I knew, from past experience, to be completely uncritical and credulous. The horn was thrust through the curtains, and a whisper issued therefrom. Sometimes a voice would come from the trumpet, but the greater part of the time a whisper only issued from it. No test information whatever was given; the voices spoke nothing that was not already known to the medium. The voices were natural and human in sound; the messages trivial, commonplace. The conversations were always stilted, cold, and lacking in reality. The voices might have been produced by the medium in either one of two ways. (1) A rubber tube might have been attached to the end of the horn and carried round to the medium's mouth. (2) The light was so poor that it would have been quite possible, most of the time, for the medium to have spoken directly into the trumpet. A large portion of the time, the lady, formerly seated at E. stood in front of the cabinet, so as to shut off any clear view of the medium's head, by those in the circle. In fact, the whole séance bore so many evident traces of fraud, and could so easily have been produced in that manner; and since one or two incidents (such as the messages from my mother and father) were clearly fraudulent, I felt justified in saying that the séance presented no evidence whatever of any supernormal powers of forces at work, or any powers, beyond those of the physical muscles of the medium.

In forming this conclusion, I have been influenced, also, by certain other incidents, that point to fraud on the medium's part. One of these is the fact that Keeler was practically exposed several years ago, in this same cabinet performance. Again, The Seybert Commission, when they had their sitting with Keeler, were entirely dissatisfied with the results attained, and thought that fraud could easily account for all the phenomena they observed in his presence, and through his mediumship. (See *Report*, pp. 82-7.) I have been informed, also, by a resident of Washington, D. C., (Keeler's home city) that it is generally accepted there that

his materializing séances are fraudulent—even by those persons who accept the slate-writing séances as genuine. Finally, I have before me the following letter, written to Dr. Hyslop, by a practicing physician of Washington, which contains quite positive evidence of fraud. The letter is as follows:

Washington, D. C., April 4th, 1907.

Dear Professor Hyslop:—

"I wish to report to you and the Society some observations secured at a séance, held by Pierre Keeler, 1301 Fairmont, St., N. W., in this city, on or about the 8th of February, 1907.

"It was a 'light' séance, where a cloth was stretched across one corner of the room, with three people (myself being one) sitting in front of the outside cloth, forming what he calls a 'battery.'

"After various thumpings on a tambourine, guitar and table rappings, a hand appeared over the curtain between the party on my left, (he being the one on Mr. Keeler's right), and I noticed a place on the outside of the right index finger of this hand, that resembled a burned place on the skin.

"After the séance some one asked Mr. Keeler to read a slip of paper, purporting to contain a message from the 'other side,' and, in adjusting his glasses, and holding the paper where the light would reflect on the same, I noticed the same burned place, on his right index finger.

"My deduction is, that the hand that appeared over the curtain was none other than that of the medium.

"Very respectfully yours,

"W. L. S——."

In view of all the evidence that has been adduced in the above article, I do not think it is necessary to furnish additional facts in order to establish the fact that Keeler is a clever trickster, and the degree of perfection he has attained in his tricks would certainly indicate that he must have been in the habit of practising these tricks continuously for a number of years.

I leave my readers to draw their own conclusions from these facts.

§ IV.

TEST AND TRANCE MEDIUMS.

The Society for Psychical Research has, by repeated experience, found that it is certainly more profitable to investigate the mental phenomena than the so-called physical; and the experience of the American Society has, so far, at least, agreed with this view of the matter entirely. Whenever any mediums who produced physical manifestations of any kind, presented themselves for investigation, these mediums have invariably been detected in fraud, and generally in fraud of the most trivial and obvious character. Leaving Eusapia Paladino out of account, for the time being, it is safe to say that there is not a medium in the world today, who is producing physical phenomena, who has not been exposed in fraud at one time or another (and, indeed, we know that Eusapia will, whenever he gets the chance, and is accused of fraud by her very defenders.) From the reports that had been sent into the Society, I had been almost forced to the conclusion that Keeler's slate-writing was, in part at least, genuine; but we have seen this to be trickery also—trickery of a more subtle and refined sort, it is true, but still trickery. Not wishing to have the charge brought against us—that 'the Society is totally neglecting the physical phenomena,' however, it spent two whole weeks in investigating them, this summer (1907)—the results of which investigation I am now detailing. It will be seen that the results attained are not very promising for the future; they do not indicate that much is to be gained by continued investigations along this line; and that the Society would get better returns by expending its energies and money on those mediums who provide the mental tests and phenomena—at least, until a well attested case arises, calling for serious consideration. The officials of Lily Dale, indeed, recognize this, and do not and will not employ professional mediums producing physical phenomena,—realizing that such phenomena as are observed in their presence are at most doubtful, and almost invariably fraudulent. We were careful to inquire into this point, and I quote from a letter from the Treasurer, Dr. George B. Warne—whom I had

the pleasure of meeting while at Lily Dale, and who is an enemy to frauds of all kinds, and honestly searching for the truth. In reply to a letter from Dr. Hyslop, asking him the details of this part of the management, he wrote as follows:

4203 Evans Ave., Chicago,
Sept. 23, 1907.

Dr. James H. Hyslop:

Dear Sir:—Your favor of the 17th inst. awaited my arrival here. I will always be glad to lend you a hand as I may be able. I am in close sympathy and touch with the Editor of the *Progressive Thinker*, to whom I refer you.

Lily Dale Assembly is a Corporation under the Laws of New York State. . . . The stockholders elect a Board of Directors each year, and the Board chooses its President, Secretary and Treasurer. The Directors engage the talent for the summer programme and never employ mediums for physical phenomena—they visit the camp like any other class of individuals, knowing they will have more patronage because of the crowds there, than if they stayed at home. Whenever visitors submit charges of trickery, the board investigates, and if they are sustained by the evidence, after hearing both sides, the offending medium is compelled to leave the camp.

Our work here, as all over the country, is going through a stage of evolutionary education. Spiritualists from Ocean to Ocean are getting their eyes open to trickery in so-called message work, as well as to the phenomena—so-called. The *Thinker* [*Progressive Thinker*] and some of our well-known speakers are leading in the reformatory work.

I would be glad to be advised just how Mr. Carrington and his lady assistant graded each medium they investigated at Lily Dale this summer. I know something of their general conclusions. Command my services at any time for the Truth and nothing but the Truth.

Sincerely yours,
GEO. B. WARNE.

It will be seen from this that physical mediums are not rated highly by the Lily Dale officials; and rightly. Platform "test," mediums are engaged by them, who speak daily from the platform of the Auditorium, there being a new medium every two weeks. These mediums also give private readings, for which they, of course, charge their sitters.

I had sittings with several of these mediums, and received

some interesting results—though they were not of such a character as to compel me to assume that they necessitated any supernormal explanation. That some of these mediums were genuine I have not the slightest doubt; though the grounds on which I rest my faith would be totally insufficient to convince the sceptic, objectively. I am now stating my opinion, merely; and am not attempting to supply the facts upon which this opinion is founded. That may be done at another time; in another place. At present, I am concerned with the physical phenomena at Lily Dale exclusively; and as the trance sittings contain nothing that is positive proof of the supernormal, I feel entitled to omit that part of the investigation. I shall accordingly pass over them here, and come to what is, perhaps, the most interesting case that I have to report—a case of physical phenomena occurring in the home circle. The psychological aspects of this case are extremely interesting; and I accordingly turn to it without further ado.

§ V.

PHENOMENA WITNESSED IN A PRIVATE CIRCLE.

Mindful of the fact that the best results are often obtained in the humblest of quarters—through the least known mediums—I wandered up one of the small side-streets, off the general track of business, and saw upon one of the houses, the sign:

"MISS M. V. GRAY,"*

"AUTOMATIC MESSAGE BEARER."

Wondering what this out-of-the-way sign could indicate, I knocked, and asked for a sitting. Soon Miss Gray appeared, and we retired to the séance room. Miss Gray seated me in a chair, and took one facing me. She then explained to me her type of "mediumship." She merely closes her eyes, and becomes passive; she "gives up." She then begins to speak, almost instantly, in English, and her thoughts and words and actions thenceforth are purely automatic. She has no control over them whatever. She is not

* Pseudonym.—H. C.

entranced or unconscious, however, but quite normal and conscious of all that is going on around her. She can listen to the conversation of another person, and more or less follow it, while she is talking. There is no amnesia; she remembers all that transpires during and before the sitting. Her eyes are either open or closed; it makes no difference to her which. If an emphatic remark is made by her, the hand and arm emphasize the remark; and these motions, too, are automatic, she asserts, and not initiated by her. During the sitting, when she is in the peculiar state indicated, her face becomes flushed, and the cords in her forehead stand out; her neck also becomes enlarged, and the whole head gives the appearance of being congested with blood.

I have said that Miss Gray has no control over her voice or her actions. She can, however, stop speaking whenever she desires, and can instantly cease or commence at will. When the voice ceases, her actions and motions cease to be automatic. She can also brush off a fly, close the door, etc., without in any way interfering with the flow of talk which continues unchecked. It will thus be seen that she is apparently normal in every way, mentally and physically, except that she has no control over the words that flow from her mouth. She does not ever know what the next word will be, and listens with as much interest and curiosity as her sitter. To make matters still more interesting, what she says frequently represents supernormal knowledge, and seems to indicate that her utterance is directed by some intelligence other than her purely normal self. At least, such is my distinct impression, for I was told some things, during the course of my sitting, which, I feel sure, could not have been known to the medium. However, I shall not anticipate, on that score. As will be seen from the above discussion, I do not consider fraud any part of the explanation of this medium's case; and I may say, by way of support of this impression, which I gained by conversation with her, that she is not a professional medium, in any true sense of the word. She lives at Lily Dale all the year round, and only placed her sign out to keep a number of people away who would formerly flock to her, asking for readings, and paying nothing. It was

a matter of self-defence with her. Such was her statement, and I have no reason to doubt her word. In fact, I subsequently became quite convinced of her honesty. With these preliminary remarks, then, let us turn to the sitting, and see what results were obtained.

The language employed by the medium, while in the peculiar state before referred to, in which she delivers her messages, is peculiar. It is quaint and simple, and out of the ordinary in many respects—"thee" being used for "you;" "thy" instead of "your," etc. The most interesting fact in connection with her speech, however, is the fact that it more or less *rhymes* throughout. Thus:

"We would a speaker make of thee,
 "And so we do say unto thee—
 "Most careful in all thou doest be,
 "So we may aid thee in thy work . . .," etc.

The rhyme is bad enough, to be sure, but it becomes interesting when rolled off by the yard, without break, in an automatic manner—particularly if the facts told one are suggestive of the supernormal. In my own case, such certainly seemed to be the fact.

Miss Gray sat with closed eyes for a few moments, and then began in the peculiar, high tone of voice characteristic of this state, and in the rhyme before mentioned. I regret that I cannot give the details of this sitting, for the reason that I took no notes at the time, not knowing what I was to see or experience—owing to the ambiguity of the sign on the door—and so took no paper with me. I can therefore only give the results of this sitting in very general outline. My physical condition was described by her with great accuracy, and I was advised to take more exercise. This was very good advice, and extremely *a propos*. I was told that I would be called upon to speak a good deal in public later on; for that reason I was to enlarge my chest and breathing capacity. My mental life and attitude were remarkably well defined, and good and sound advice was offered on future financial matters. I do not think that much of the information

given could have been surmised normally, from her brief conversation with me. Our long talk came later, after the sitting. My home and business surroundings were quite accurately described; also the office of the A. S. P. R. My relations to Dr. Hyslop were also accurately given; and other personal information, which I regret that I cannot give—for the reason, chiefly, that I have forgotten it. I am well aware of the unscientific nature of this report, and can only regret it. At the time, I fully intended having another sitting; perhaps a series, but these never transpired, for reasons to be specified presently.

At the conclusion of the sitting, Miss Gray informed me of her past history—seeing that I was interested in her case. She has been a trained nurse, and understands scientific method, and, to some extent, the intricacies of her own case. Her interest in it is, indeed, lukewarm, but that rather tends to confirm the idea that her power—whatever it may be—is genuine. Then followed a most singular and interesting recital. It appears that Miss Gray has been the sport of “spirits” ever since her childhood. She has always been more or less of an invalid, and frequently “controlled”—both physically and mentally. For instance, here are two sample incidents, out of a number of similar ones told me. When a young child, these influences were so strong and uncontrollable that it was resolved to move to another part of the country, in order to escape them. The whole family accordingly moved West, and settled in a small town, in order to escape the influences, if possible. The child was carefully washed every night, and put to bed between clean sheets. As the result of this treatment, the “influences” gradually left her—though, if the most careful precautions were neglected for two or three nights, raps would be heard and “the forces” would gradually control the child again. For several years this battle went on between mortal and spirit; and,—whatever these obsessing influences might have been—it was only lately that they were brought under her control and volition. Mrs. Gray, who was sitting in another chair in the same room, throughout this narration, confirmed these facts in every detail.

The second incident is of great interest, and occurred only a short time ago—after Miss Gray had grown up and was practising as a nurse. She was treating Miss Eleanor Kirk at the time (who is the authoress of several books on astrological subjects) when suddenly, the piano, situated at the opposite side of the room, began to play of its own accord. It played for some little time; then stopped, as suddenly as it had begun! No one was near the piano at the time; everyone heard it playing; it was broad daylight; Miss Gray was busily employed giving Miss Kirk an osteopathic treatment, and no one present had expected anything of the kind—in fact, it broke in upon their train of thought and conversation. Nothing of the sort had ever occurred before, nor has it occurred since. At the time they did not know who the “medium” was, and Miss Kirk and a few friends “sat” for a number of evenings in private, but never obtained any results whatever. They then came to the conclusion that “the medium” in the case must have been Miss Gray. They so informed her, and she was as surprised as they—since nothing of the kind has ever before occurred in her presence. Such were the incidents of this extraordinary case, as related to me by Miss Gray herself.*

The conversation turned to the physical phenomena, and Miss Gray expressed her indignation at the constant fraud

* I called on Miss Kirk, on the afternoon of Saturday, November 16, 1907, in the hope that this experience might receive confirmation at her hands, and that the facts might be strengthened proportionately—at least the evidence for them. I found Miss Kirk in, and questioned her about the occurrence. To my great regret, she remembered nothing whatever about these facts; she does not remember Miss Gray, nor anything of the kind having ever occurred during her visit. Miss Kirk told me that many strange and remarkable things had happened in her presence,—including table tipping, levitations, etc., but she did not remember this particular fact. I must confess that, for various reasons, I should be compelled to regard her evidence as virtually worthless, were it affirmative. Miss Gray struck me as having a far better memory of all facts of this character than Miss Kirk, and her memory would be more sure and more to be relied upon. I still think that something of the sort must have occurred, and have been forgotten by Miss Kirk. I also think that Miss Gray was honest in her statement, so far as her memory goes, and think it possible that hallucination, exaggeration, mal-observation and bad memory are the explanations, rather than wilful deceit, and trickery, on the part of either of my informants. It is to be regretted that almost every case of this character, when traced carefully home, is found to have no foundation in fact—at least that has been my invariable experience.

that was practised, and said that she supposed that I had found little or nothing else at Lily Dale. She and her mother—an old lady, and, so far as I could see, transparently honest—then told me that physical phenomena had been obtained in their own circle, no other persons being present, except herself, her daughter (Miss Gray), and the youngest daughter, aged about 13. I was informed that startling physical manifestations had been obtained, as the result of these séances—independent voices, raps, thumps, whispers, lights, luminous writing upon slates, chords struck upon the piano, etc., etc. No money was charged for these séances; in fact, no one was allowed to witness them, except a few private and personal friends, now and then. Naturally, I was extremely anxious to be present at one of these séances,—which seemed to promise more than all Lily Dale put together, so far as the physical phenomena were concerned,—and which, from the description, seemed to rival Stainton Moses' séances at their best! It was arranged that I should call two evenings later (the next evening I had already arranged to be present at a materializing séance) and they would ask the intelligences, in the interval, whether I might be present at one of the séances, and witness the phenomena. I should be told their decision when I called again. Needless to say, I awaited their decision with keen impatience and interest.

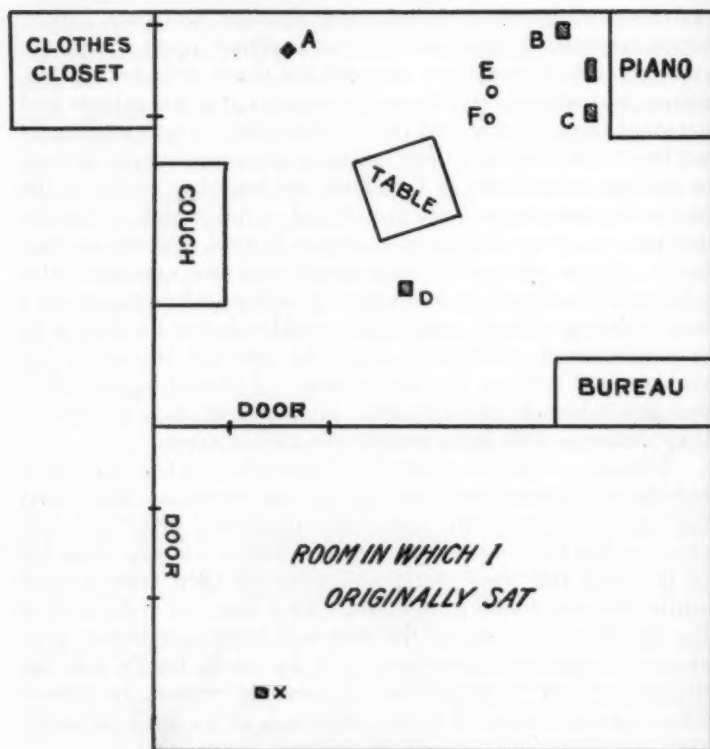
I wish to state one other fact before closing this section of my report. Some time during our conversation, Mrs. Gray had informed me that, upon one occasion, when she was alone in the house, she had seen and heard a whole shelf full of tin pots and pans rattle and sway of their own accord, while she was looking at them. This was the only time in her life that anything of the sort had happened in her presence. It appeared, therefore, as if the whole family was mediumistic, and I looked for interesting results to follow. These results followed in due sequence, as we shall presently see.

First Séance with Mrs. and the Misses Gray.

August 7, 1907.

On arriving at the house, on the agreed-upon evening, I was disappointed to hear that the "control"—"Mike"—had

stated that no strangers were to be admitted! I proposed that I should sit in the next room, in the dark, while Miss Gray, her mother, and the little girl, took their usual places in the séance room. I was allowed to look at this room before it was darkened for the séance. I give herewith a diagram of the room, and the positions of the sitters at the commencement of the séance:



Miss Gray herself sat at A.; her mother at B., and the little girl at C. I sat in the next room, at X., and, if I was to be admitted, I was to enter in the dark, and take my seat at D.

Two tin trumpets (one about two, and the other about three feet in length) were stood on the floor at E. and F. The shorter of these was a regular gramophone horn, and was heavy and difficult to keep extended with one hand; the other was of thin tin, and very light. I examined the room, and looked into the closet, but I was not too critical or sceptical, for I thought that my admission to the circle might depend upon my attitude towards the sitters and the phenomena. We all wished to see the phenomena in full swing before applying any tests. Let me once again repeat my conviction in the honesty of Miss Gray and her mother. Of the little girl I was not so sure, and felt at once that she must be *physically* excluded from all participation in the phenomena before they could have weight in a court of science, or furnish any conclusive evidence of the supernormal. As stated, no tests were applied on this occasion. I will merely state here that the child is shy, quiet, reserved, and rarely speaks to strangers; she is anaemic, and might suffer from chlorosis; in fact, she is a typical "poltergeist girl." I need hardly say I awaited the results with keen interest.

I took my place at X., and the lights were extinguished in both rooms. The door was closed between the séance room and the one in which I sat, and the séance began. We sat in silence for some minutes, when a loud voice was heard to come through the horn, and "Mike" announced his presence. He was asked whether I could come, and a negative answer was given. Then began a long argument between Miss Gray, her mother, and "Mike." I could hear their voices and that of the horn at the same time, in the argument, showing that they, at least, were not doing the talking. After a lengthy argument, "Mike" was finally persuaded to allow me to enter the séance room, and this I did, taking my place at D.

Soon, the voice began again, and spoke to me through the trumpet. We held a brief conversation, and I finally promised "Mike" fifty cents if he would manifest for us. This offer was promptly accepted, and manifestations began! First of all, however, "Mike" collected his fifty cents, by pushing over the horn to me, and I placed the money in the

mouth of the horn. It was then promptly withdrawn. The voice then spoke through the horn again, thanking me—apparently the voice of a young boy or girl. I could distinctly hear the breath drawn, between sentences, and the sounds produced by the mouth and throat when speaking loudly and with an effort. (I have been told that the mouthpiece of the horn was warm and moist after the voice had spoken through it. Evidently the mouth that speaks is a material one—whoever it may be that talks.) At my request the horn was then conveyed to the ceiling and the voice spoke through it, while the horn was directly over my head, apparently floating near the ceiling. It also spoke when on the floor, and then spoke rapidly through the horn, first close to the ceiling, then close to the floor—the alternation being exceedingly rapid, and I did not see how it could have been imitated by normal movements of the trumpet. At my request, the voice now spoke through the horn, in various parts of the room—always close to the ceiling; and the horn seemed to be floating about over a very large area, the talking going on through it constantly.

Soon after this, the piano began to play, striking chords and finally thumping out a sort of tune. A voice then joined in the music, and hummed—or rather shouted—an air, the piano keeping time. All this time, Miss Gray and her mother were talking, both to each other and to me, so that there could be no question as to whether or not they were doing the talking. No sound, however, came from the little girl, who remained perfectly quiet in her corner. The playing continued for some time; then ceased, and the horn began. The voice sang and shouted through the horn, sounding in various parts of the room, near the ceiling; and on one occasion the voice sang a note which had a peculiar vibrating sound—this continuing for nearly a minute, I should judge, when the sound of a horn—clear as a clarionet—sounded also, and grew louder and louder until it swallowed up the voice from the other horn entirely, and ended in a good-sized blast. I could distinctly hear both at once—the voice and the horn—both in the air, directly over my head, apparently, and near the ceiling. I confess, this manifestation impressed

me greatly, and first caused me to doubt the fact that fraud would cover and explain all the phenomena witnessed. Things were getting interesting.

The piano then began to play again, and the voice sang,—apparently coming right out of the combination of notes and chords struck upon the piano—and at the same time terrific knocks or thumps resounded on the floor, and appeared to be walking about the room. This also impressed me, for here were footsteps or blows on the floor at least six feet from the piano (at least, so it seemed) and the piano was playing at the same time. I could still hear Mrs. and Miss Gray talking, and they invariably answered my questions when I asked them any, and without delay. The blows were very loud, and resounded throughout the whole house. The piano then vibrated, and I could feel the whole room also vibrating, in a lesser degree.

A faint light now appeared, and floated about the room. Then two lights were visible—the second apparently issuing from the first—and floated about, distant from each other about four feet. First one and then both of them moved close to the ceiling, finally returning to a spot above the piano keys, and danced about, up and down, over the keys, while the piano was playing, as though they themselves were striking the notes. While some of this was most interesting I must confess that many of the phenomena were not remarkable to me, and were even suggestive of fraud, since the lights exactly resembled those made by the heads of lucifer matches, when rubbed between the fingers,—after they have been moistened, and when the hands have been separated. The lights near the ceiling might have been imitated by the medium mounting upon a chair, and extending her arms over her head. The matches might have been held between the fingers of the hands, while several notes were struck on the piano, or the match manipulated by one hand, while the fingers of the other struck the keys of the piano. On watching the movements of these lights, I could see that they exactly corresponded, in their movements, with the notes that were struck. It was as though the whole body had been employed, and was working at different things simultane-

ously. It will be seen that my suspicions, so far as they went, rested upon the little girl, seated so conveniently near the piano, the horns, and all the other paraphernalia. However, I had no *proof* of fraud, of course, inasmuch as the motions of the lights might have been simply coincidental with the playing; and I certainly would not think of charging fraud against even a professional medium on such slight grounds,—much less against this little girl, against whom there was no other evidence than such “possibilities.”

A slate was now picked up, from off the table, and several letters, and finally words were traced upon the slate in luminous streaks of writing. These faded rapidly, but were bright, and I could hear the scratching of some solid substance upon the slates, while the writing was in progress. The slate was then replaced upon the table, and the table itself was pushed over close to me, and I was requested to place my right hand upon the table, in the center, palm downward. This I did. The horn then spoke, and said that the spirits would endeavor to touch me, if I promised not to touch them in return. I promised not to move without permission. A hand then pulled my trousers in a sharp, jerky manner, and a moment later, my hand was patted by a small hand. This hand was warm and moist, and apparently quite human. My own right hand was then touched, and, upon the suggestion of Miss Gray, my hand was kissed. This was done twice. The lips were again warm and unmistakeably human. The trumpet was then picked up and banged against the ceiling; then against the floor, and then against the ceiling and the floor in rapid alternation. “Mike” spoke, and asked me if I thought it was “a fake.” Whispers came through the horn; and then came the best and the most convincing phenomenon of the evening. The piano commenced to play—tiny lights hovering over the keys a part of the time, but disappearing after a few moments. Then, at my request, the horn was picked up, and banged against the ceiling several times. “Mike” then spoke through the horn—apparently directly over my head—and this was repeated several times. The voice certainly seemed to be nine or ten feet from the piano, while the latter was still playing. Miss Gray and her mother could be heard

talking from their respective chairs. The voice spoke several times over my head, while the piano was playing. I then asked "Mike" if, in addition to all this, he could knock upon the floor. Almost instantly very loud raps occurred upon the floor of the room, so that we now had (1) the piano playing; (2) the voice from the horn, and (3) the knocks upon the floor, all going on at the same instant, in different parts of the room. Soon they stopped, but I asked "Mike" to repeat this collective phenomenon for me, so that I might study it closely, and make sure of the location of each of the three. Three times did "Mike" repeat this for me, until I was perfectly satisfied that the three events were actually going on at one time, and in various parts of the room. Soon after this "Mike" withdrew—after thanking me for the money—and the séance closed. I was promised that, if I came often enough, I might see these things *in the light*. Well! That would be interesting indeed!

Summing up, now, this séance, I think the case may be stated thus:

(1) *Facts that might indicate fraud on the part of the little girl.*

The fact that she never spoke during the course of the manifestations.

The fact that the order of intelligence displayed by "Mike" and his friends was just about the order of intelligence that would be possessed by this little girl, were her own mind controlling the manifestations.

The "spirit-lights" were very suggestive of trickery—they being easily producible by means of ordinary sulphur matches, as I have elsewhere shown; and so was the phosphorescent writing upon the slates. This could have been done upon a damp slate, by means of the matches before mentioned. I noticed that a number of these matches were lying on the piano, just before the séance opened.

The kisses and touches were all very human, and at least suggestive of trickery.

The fact that the little girl would say nothing about the

phenomena, but only smiled afterward, when they were discussed.

The fact that she was just the type of girl who would love to play tricks upon and befool her elders—the type to whose hysterical temperament notoriety and flattery are as the breath of life.

The fact that I subsequently ascertained that the horn could be banged against the ceiling and the floor one after the other in rapid succession, by anyone who merely stands up, and holds the horn by the extreme end—the mouthpiece.

On the other hand we have—

(2) *Facts pointing away from fraud as the explanation.*

Among these are:

The speaking through the trumpet, at a considerable distance from the piano, while the latter was still playing, and while raps and thumps were resounding on the floor also, in still another part of the room. I found it hard to account for this on any theory of fraud.

The incident in which the voice was gradually merged into the sound of the horn—the two sounding at once, close to the ceiling, and giving a very weird and extraordinary effect.

The fact that I once ducked my head when the horn was flying about the room at a rapid rate, and instantly a voice said, "You needn't be afraid, we won't hurt you," etc. As the room was pitch black, I do not see how this could have been the result of any trickery or fraud. We should have to assume that it was a coincidence—the probability of this being strengthened or weakened according to the outcome of the investigation; *i. e.*, whether or not the phenomena ultimately proved to be fraudulent in character.

The fact that these same manifestations are promised—in the light.

The fact that Miss Gray and her mother both assert that they have obtained similar phenomena in the light. (*See above.*)

The fact that all the members of the circle are mediumistic.

The fact that no object is to be gained by fraudulently producing the phenomena—since no money is ever asked, nor, indeed, are outsiders ever admitted to the circle.

The fact that tests will be permitted as soon as the development is "further along"—the tying of the hands and feet of all three, and even a flash light introduced, if desired. Already the idea had occurred to them to place the case in the hands of the S. P. R. for investigation, so soon as they were more advanced.

All this was volunteered in a talk after the séance, when we were discussing it among ourselves. All invitations to investigate came from Mrs. and Miss Gray, and evidently did not meet with the approval of the little girl, who, however, said nothing. Of course the last five of the "reasons" I advanced for thinking the phenomena genuine, are presumptions merely, but I think that the first three are valid, and await ultimate explanation. That I hope to obtain at the next séance. It will be admitted, I think, that the case is at least sufficiently suggestive to warrant further investigation, and that I propose to undertake. The next séance will perhaps help to clear up some of these obscure details, and determine further whether fraud is or is not sufficient to explain all the phenomena witnessed by me at this memorable séance.

The above is a *verbatim* copy of my original report of this séance, written out immediately upon my return to the hotel. It will be seen that it is somewhat crude, in parts, but I have kept the original form and wording, in order to convey to my reader, the more clearly, the mental impression I received from this first séance,—which, I confess, was intensely interesting to me, because so different from anything of the kind I had ever seen before, though I have sat many dozens of times in dark circles, and never before discovered anything but the most obvious and palpable fraud. This séance, however, impressed me greatly, and I awaited the advent of the next evening with keen interest. It eventually arrived, bringing with it some unexpected results, as we shall see. I shall

again quote from my original report of the séance, written immediately upon my return to the hotel, and within a few minutes of its completion.

Second Séance with Mrs. and the Misses Gray.

August 9, 1907.

I attended this second séance in high hopes, but determined, at the same time, to watch for such phenomena as could not well be accounted for by normal means; and see whether a normal explanation would present itself upon further investigation and observation. The room being arranged very much as in the last séance, the lights were extinguished, and we sat in total darkness.

Very soon the horn began, talking to me, and carried on a conversation. The voice certainly originated in a human throat. By listening carefully, I could hear the indrawing of the breath; the sounds made by the lips, tongue, etc.; and there could be no doubt of the fact that the sounds were produced in a human throat. At my request, the voice sounded near the ceiling; but I now noticed this very peculiar fact: the voice seemed to be close to my ear at the same time that it was near the ceiling! I bent very far forward; then drew my chair closer, and leaned forward again. I could now detect the method of the production of this voice. The little girl was standing up, and speaking into the trumpet, which was directed into the air, over my head. The two sounds I heard were (1) the *real* sounds produced in the throat of the little girl; and (2) the *apparent* sounds, in the air, near the ceiling—giving the distinct impression that a voice was talking at that point. Upon request, the voice responded, first near the ceiling, then near the floor, and I could plainly hear the girl talking into the horn, now that my ears were—unknown to her—quite close to her mouth. Now and then she would mount on the chair, in her stocking feet, and speak through the trumpet, from that position. The whole process was thus made clear to me, and I could see the method for the production of voices close to the ceiling. That part of the performance was, therefore, made plain—though the illu-

sion was so perfect that I do not think the trick could ever have been detected, in the ordinary manner.

The piano now played, and the stamping about the room began. There was nothing to indicate, (now that I examined the facts critically, and more at leisure than I was enabled to at the first séance, when I did not know what was coming next), that both of these were not produced by the little girl. She might have played upon the piano with one hand, and reached out into the room with one leg and foot, and stamped over what would be a wide area. Lights began to appear now, very faintly, and raps indicated that "Mike" wanted two wet slates, a wet cloth, and a dry cloth. These were procured, and laid on the table, close beside the little girl. I noticed that she had again brought in and laid upon the piano, just behind her, a number of matches. They were within her reach. Soon, I heard a hand groping for these matches, and a moment later, the customary light appeared. Soon two appeared, then three, in various parts of the room. The slate was written upon, in the customary luminous writing, and this was obviously done by scratching over the surface of the wet slate with the matches. The damp rag was then rubbed over the matches, and held up and shaken. It gave the appearance of six or eight little spots of light, and, when moved about rapidly, was exceedingly deceptive. The rag was placed on the end of the tin horn, and waved about, near the ceiling. It was then dropped upon the piano. At this point, the whole method of working the trick became certain and obvious to me. So much "light" had been produced, in one way and another, that it began to slightly illumine surrounding objects; and I could plainly see the little girl's fingers handling the matches. Also, the illuminated handkerchief being on the piano, and she, consequently, sitting between it and myself, I could plainly see her moving about to and fro, manipulating the matches. Once, her face became slightly visible, as it was bent over the slate, in the writing. There could be no possible doubt that this part of the séance, at least, was fraudulent.

When several lights were produced in various parts of the room, they were either stationary, or only as far apart as the

arms of the little girl might have stretched. When they appeared in various parts of the room at once, they were invariably *stationary*, and this effect was doubtless accomplished by rubbing the match with the wet fingers, and carrying the match to a certain spot, and leaving it there. The medium would then be free to go away, and produce lights elsewhere.

I do not think that the remaining phenomena are worth recounting in great detail. Touches, raps, etc., were constant, and the last séance was repeated in all its essential features. As the result of this séance, and the further investigation, I unhesitatingly came to the conclusion that all the phenomena I had witnessed in both séances were fraudulently produced by the little girl in question; and I shall now give my reasons for coming to what some of my readers may consider an unfair conclusion.

The young girl certainly produced the lights in a fraudulent manner; of that there can be no doubt, since I saw the method of their production very clearly.

The voice through the trumpet was also produced by her. This my closer and unknown investigation in the dark enabled me to perceive. I detected her making the sounds herself. The apparent distance of the voice is explicable and can easily be understood when we take into account what we know of the difficulty of locating sounds with accuracy. Though singularly deceptive—more so than I could have imagined—the voice was, nevertheless, produced by the young girl herself, as I distinctly heard her speaking into the trumpet at the moment the voice came (apparently) from the air over my head, near the ceiling, in the centre of the room. When the voice appeared near the ceiling at the moment that the piano was playing, “the medium” doubtless stood up, spoke into the trumpet—directed to the ceiling—and, at the same time, struck notes and chords with her left hand upon the piano. At no time was there a definite *melody* played upon the piano. It could easily have been done in this manner, and, such being the case, the improbability of its having been done in any other manner becomes proportionately small.

The touches, etc., were certainly human; and the raps

could easily have been done by the young girl, and so could the noise of the stamping feet. Indeed, the sound of a rustling dress indicated that a material form—clothed—was walking about the room, while these manifestations were in progress.

There remains to be explained the case in which the voice was gradually merged into the horn. This sounded very wonderful at the time, but subsequent experiments have shown me how this may easily be accomplished. Both horns are placed to the mouth, one on either side. The lips are puckered, so that the air is all blown through *one* side of the mouth—into horn I. Gradually the lips are opened, until both horns are being blown into,—when horn I. is gradually removed, and all the air directed into horn II. In this manner the effect I have described can be duplicated.

On reviewing the first séance, after witnessing the second, I became convinced that everything witnessed at that séance was fraud and trickery, and nothing but that. Not knowing what was coming, on the first occasion, and hence not knowing what to look for, and being tempted to place the most favorable construction possible on the phenomena, because of the fact that they happened in a private circle, I doubtless over-estimated the value of the phenomena observed, as evidence for the supernormal, and mal-observed many of the manifestations, owing to my over-receptive attitude of mind. I was most anxious to obtain some genuine phenomena before leaving Lily Dale, and this circle seemed to offer the best chance of seeing any that I had so far encountered; it held out some faint hope of success, which I saw could never be satisfied by professional "physical mediums." Because of my attitude of mind, then, I doubtless observed the first séance badly. No effort was made to produce any of the manifestations in the light, and I am persuaded that this is merely a "bluff" on the part of "Mike,"—or the little girl, rather,—to keep up the interest of the sitters. Inasmuch as the observed phenomena were decidedly and unmistakably fraudulent, it is needless to say that they never will be produced in the light. I subsequently heard Mrs. Gray describe some of the phenomena I myself had witnessed at the last

séance, to a friend, and her account of the facts was so distorted (unconsciously, I have no doubt) and enlarged upon, that I felt that no credence whatever could be placed in any of her observations or reports, should such be forthcoming.

Now, as to the object to be gained by the little girl—the “medium”—who produced the phenomena for the occasion. She obtained money upon rare occasions, such as that of my visit, and that, probably, did not weigh with her to any appreciable degree. I think there can be no doubt that a hysterical love of notoriety, of fame, and of being made more or less the center of observation and conversation, are the impelling motives—at least those chiefly. There are many girls to which this would appeal strongly, and the little girl I saw is precisely the type from whom one would expect just such a morbid desire and craving. All her physical and mental characteristics, so far as I was enabled to judge, supported this view and conclusion, and tell very strongly in favor of Mr. Podmore’s “naughty little girl” theory, for cases of this general character. She was doubtless enabled to pick up the tricks from the mediums on the grounds; from facts and hints they let drop, and to work these up, in her exceedingly precocious and active brain, into a very presentable and baffling performance—one that was, indeed, more interesting to me, upon first sight, than all the séances of the professional mediums in Lily Dale,—and more convincing.

Two days later I met the young girl (the “medium”) and obtained a virtual confession from her. While she would not state to me in a straightforward manner that she was the instigator of the phenomena (I suppose for fear that I might inform her mother and sister of the fact *instanter*) she virtually gave me to understand that she and she alone was the author of all the phenomena that I had witnessed,—or that had ever been produced at any of the séances in question. She did not try to conceal this fact, and laughed with me about the phenomena, and their production; only refused to make any definite confession—doubtless for the reason indicated above. At all events, I myself felt that no further confession was needed, after my conversation with the little girl; nor did I feel that any further investigation of the case was

necessitated—which investigation was, moreover, rendered impossible by the fact that every evening was occupied thenceforward by séances with one or more of the mediums upon the grounds.

To sum up: the case, while certainly more interesting than anything I had seen at Lily Dale, and more suggestive of the supernormal, was nevertheless clearly fraudulent throughout, as detection and subsequent confession proved. But it goes to show, once again, that no reliance whatever can be placed upon physical phenomena, or reports of such, unless the most rigid standards of evidence have been maintained throughout,—by men or women competent to detect fraud, should such exist, and familiar with the psychology of deception. If such persons have made the investigations, and their reports of the phenomena observed are detailed, and indicate that measures have been taken throughout to prevent the practice of fraud—only then do accounts of the physical phenomena become even worthy or serious investigation; and this fact was more than ever brought home to me by my Lily Dale experience. Of course, genuine phenomena may be observed and obtained in the home circle, and they are always interesting and worthy of careful investigation and study; but I am convinced that, from the professional “physical medium,” nothing is to be obtained but fraud and the results of fraud.

§ VI.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: FRAUDULENT MEDIUMSHIP.

I have now given the reader the results of my investigations at Lily Dale, and a report of every séance or sitting I attended while there. It will be seen that, so far as the physical manifestations go, nothing was obtained, not clearly fraudulent, though the work of several of the trance and test mediums indicated that they possessed supernormal power of some kind. I obtained no personal evidence of this that would be convincing to the sceptic, but I became convinced of their genuine power by observing their tests given to other sitters, whom I felt to be honest, and by cultivating

their personal acquaintance. But, granting that some interesting phenomena might be obtained through these mediums (could they be critically studied), I wish to point out that trance mediums were not nearly so much sought after as were those producing the physical manifestations. These were the "stars," so to speak,—to whom all the spiritualists flocked, and to whom they paid considerable sums of money for the phenomena witnessed. These were the drawing cards;—those mediums who were supposed to give far more tangible and definite evidence of a future life than did the trance mediums—who were certainly patronized, but not nearly so much so as were the mediums producing physical phenomena. I wish to say just here that this sort of mediumship would die out very rapidly if it were not patronized, and if even decent tests were imposed and insisted upon, instead of the rank credulity everywhere present. There is no incentive, no inducement, in a place like Lily Dale, for mediums to produce or offer the genuine phenomena. If they were offered, I doubt if such a medium would pay his or her rent for the summer. Let us suppose there goes to Lily Dale a genuine physical medium—*i. e.*, one who could almost invariably insure the presence of phenomena, (practically an impossibility). Let us suppose that these phenomena consist of raps, movements of objects without contact, slight levitations, twanging upon the guitar, and scrawls upon a sheet of paper—surely a wide range of phenomena, and more than we can expect to obtain from any one medium, all at one time and invariably. Let us suppose that such is the case, however, and that these phenomena were almost always forthcoming. Do you think that such a medium would be patronized to any extent? Most certainly he would not; at least, such is the conclusion to which I came, after a careful study of the psychology of the Lily Dale visitors. The reason is this. These persons are not there for the purpose of scientific inquiry and investigation; they are already convinced, and care nothing whatever for scientific method. Being assured in their own minds that such phenomena do occur, they are prepared to swallow anything that may be offered in the name of spiritualism, without strict investigation or inquiry,

and consequently go where they can see the most for their admission fee,—the most extraordinary phenomena. They want, in fact, to “get the biggest show for their money,” as one of the old visitors put it. I think that this is the literal truth. They do not care particularly whether the phenomena are genuine or fraudulent, so long as they are abundant and sufficiently extraordinary. The primary question, “Are they genuine?” is an altogether secondary consideration with them. They want the *results*; and it does not much matter how those results are obtained. Consequently, as I said before, there is no inducement and no incentive to produce only the genuine phenomena, which would look tame indeed beside some of the manifestations that are produced. So long as this attitude is maintained by spiritualists as a whole, we can hope for very little reform along this line of fraudulent mediumship.

Of course all spiritualists are not of this type. There are some who attend the camp meetings, and go away disgusted; and I talked with many such. The officers of the Camp are of this more or less sceptical mind, so far as I could judge; but knew that phenomena of the sort craved must be supplied, or the camp would languish and finally cease to exist. This is what happened at Onset. So much discussion was aroused as the result of frequent “grabblings” and exposures of materializing mediums, and also as the result of the publication of *The Vampires of Onset*, that materializing mediums were shut out for good and all—with the result that spiritualists ceased to visit the camp, which is now virtually a summer resort. It would be the same at Lily Dale, were similar measures adopted; and the spiritualists doubtless know that. For a time, it is true, about three years ago, when the agitation concerning materializing mediums was at its height, these mediums were forbidden to come upon the grounds—even the famous and dreaded Keeler being requested to take down his sign for materializing séances. But they were gradually resumed, and are now again in full swing upon the grounds.

This agitation at Lily Dale resulted from several exposures, one after another, culminating in the charge of fraud

against the now notorious Hugh Moore, who was at Lily Dale Camp that year. This charge was made by several spiritualists; and an "Investigating Committee" was formed, to inquire into his mediumship. At the time, Moore was renting a commodious house, jointly with another materializing medium, and between them, they were holding four and five materializing séances a day,—morning, afternoon and evening. As one man expressed it: "They would get the people in; give them a good show, and shove them out again, in time for the next lot." Dollars must have been coming in pretty fast in those days! Finally, the officers began to suspect that even the best and most powerful mediums could not continue to give séances at that rate, and that there must be something shady about their work. (The mediums always call it "work.") The Investigating Committee was accordingly appointed.

First of all, Moore was asked to give a test séance in the Maplewood Hotel, (where all the spiritualists put up, when at Lily Dale). He refused, saying that the room was not "magnetized," as was his own house. One cannot very well see why he could not have "magnetized" the room in the hotel, as he had his house in the first place, but I let that pass. It was agreed that the séance should be held in his own house. A strict examination of the house was made, and nothing was found out of place,—no trap doors were discovered, and the Committee pronounced everything secure, and the séance given under test conditions. So much for the examination of "Committees"! In spite of the examination, however, a successful séance was held, until one of the forms was "grabbed" by one of the investigators, when the whole trick was discovered. A trap was brought to light, which had not been detected, and the "spirit" turned out to be one of the young women, living upon the grounds. I was informed that at least three of the waitresses of the hotel were in the habit of "spooking" for him. The séance ended in a ruction. Moore and his accomplice made their escape, together with their spooks; but his partner was soon afterwards captured. Moore made his escape through the woods. It was stated that, had he been caught that night, he would un-

doubtedly have been tarred and feathered. The spiritualists were thoroughly stirred. This incident will at least serve to show that I have not been unduly hard on the "poor materializing mediums," in my treatment of them and their character; and illustrates, also, the rotten state of affairs in such camps. After this escapade, materializing mediums were forbidden on the grounds for some time.

I shall now relate a few of the humorous things that happened to me, or of which I was told by other investigators, as happening to themselves, at some of these materializing séances. I have previously referred to the incident that happened at one of the materializing séances which I attended, when the spirit had to wait until its robe was unhooked from the hair of one of the sitters (p. 35.) A similar incident, of more serious a nature, had happened the previous year to one of the materialized forms, I was told. The spirit, in this case, had got her robe entangled in the corner of a book case that stood on one side of the room, and, in attempting to retreat to the cabinet, had pulled this whole case full of books down upon her. There was a scream, a panic, and the lights were turned up, to disclose the medium, in a state of terror, and her poor confederate, pinned beneath the book case, on the floor, groaning from her injuries. Did this spirit dematerialize? No indeed! She was carried to the hospital in an ambulance, where she was confined for six weeks,—before she was discharged, (let us hope), a wiser and a better woman.

At another of these séances, given by another medium, the following incident occurred. A widow was called to the cabinet, to speak to her former "lord and master." He walked a few steps into the room, boldly enough, and the conversation commenced. At this point, the lady happened to glance at the spirit's feet. She received a shock! Having a sense of humor, however, she merely remarked, quietly: "Why, John, tan shoes were not worn when you were alive, were they?" Sure enough, the medium had on tan shoes!

At another séance, held by yet another medium, the following incident occurred. A lady had been called up to the cabinet curtains to see her lost baby. A spirit form ad-

vanced, holding it in her arms. The mother cried and sobbed over the child, and could hardly be parted from it at the close of the interview. The form retreated into the cabinet, carrying with it the spirit child. In a few moments another form appeared, carrying a baby also, of slightly larger size. The spirit informed the circle that this was for Mrs. S——. Mrs. S—— accordingly advanced to the cabinet curtains, and looked at the baby with curiosity. "Whom is it for?" asked Mrs. S——. "For you," was the reply; "don't you recognize it? It is yours." Ah! The folly of jumping to conclusions. Let me state, just here, what this lady afterwards told me herself. She had been married twice. Her first husband had had two children, both of whom had died. He then married a second time, after the death of his first wife, his second wife being Mrs. S——. They never had any children. They both used to speak of his two children as "our children," however,—so the natural conclusion would be that "our children" would mean hers, as well as his. Seeing that she had never had any herself, her surprise may be imagined, when this baby was brought forward, and the assertion made that it was "hers." After this statement, she naturally came to the immediate conclusion that the whole thing was fraudulent, and replied, in response to the question whether she recognized it: "Well, seeing that I never had one—" At this, the spirit form started to retire into the cabinet. Mrs. S—— was anxious to see what this spirit child looked like, however, and made a grab for the spirit baby,—just as the tall form was receding into the cabinet. The spirit pulled, and she pulled, and the result was that the spirit child exploded with a loud report! It was a rubber bag,—such as could be blown out to any required size! The bag collapsed, and fell upon the floor, where it was discovered when the lights were turned up,—as they were almost immediately. The first lady, who had cried so profusely over this rubber doll, was with difficulty restrained from violent measures. When I was told this story, I naturally laughed heartily, and thereupon an old spiritualist, sitting by, reproved Mrs. S—— for telling me the story. He evidently thought the "poor, innocent medium" was being greatly abused!

I could relate a number of stories such as the above, did space permit, but it is not necessary that I should do so. Mr. Will Irwin has several amusing incidents of the kind, in his articles, published in *Collier's Weekly* (September 14, 21, 28, and October 5, 1907) which should be read by everyone interested in this subject, as representing, in a graphic manner, one side of this question—a side too little known, and even questioned by those who have not studied the subject carefully,—which doubtless exists on this side of the Atlantic far more than on the other. I do not think it probable, from what I am enabled to gather, that fraud of the character here described is nearly so universal in England, *e. g.*, as it is in America, and consequently those living in that country are not fair critics of what happens here in America. The amount of fraud that exists in this country is something amazing, and one can very readily understand why it should be so. In the first place, there is doubtless more sharp, shrewd, cunning business intellect in this country than elsewhere; and on the other hand, there are many men, wealthy, and thinking that, because they are sharp enough to make a fortune in lard or copper, or whatever it may be, they are sharp enough to detect any trickery that might be attempted in their presence. They possess that "half baked intelligence," as Dr. Hyslop so happily called it, which makes them absolutely self-confident, to the point of being self-complacent. Such persons are frequently the most gullible and easily deceived of all. They are so confident of their ability to detect fraud that they are rendered quite incapable of detecting it. Besides, many mediumistic tricks do not depend upon *detection* at all, but upon *previous knowledge*. If this actual knowledge of the method of working the trick is not possessed, it would be quite impossible to detect it, in many cases. Let me illustrate this. The sitter cleans a pile of slates. The medium then places a large slate over the top of the pile for a few seconds. He tells his sitter that this top slate is "magnetized," and will magnetize the others too,—enabling the writing to take place upon them more readily. Soon, two slates are placed together. They are held for a time, by medium and sitter; then separated, but no writing is

found. Again they are placed together, held, and again separated, and this time a message is found on one of the slates, covering the whole of one of its sides.

This is a much used trick, and has been described by Mr. David P. Abbott, in the *Journal*, A. S. P. R., in one of his articles on "Spirit Slate-Writing and Billet Tests." The secret consists chiefly in the fact that a slate, containing the message, was hidden under the large slate, and placed upon the pile of smaller slates on the table, when the large slate was placed on them. Now, I do not care how closely the onlooker might have watched every move of the medium, he would never have detected the *modus operandi*, in this case, and he never could, if he had not been in possession of the *previous knowledge* of the fact that the small slate was hidden beneath the large one, and hence was placed on the top of the pile of slates, when the large slate was placed upon them. This is only one illustration; but it will serve to show that acute intelligence and ordinary sharpness and sagacity will not serve to detect mediums of this character; and that nothing will serve for their detection, or insure it, but actual knowledge of the methods employed.

Spiritualists (not all, of course, but the majority of them) are quite ignorant of the methods that are employed by fraudulent mediums, and are, in the bargain, extremely credulous and very bad observers. One lady, who had just returned from a slate-writing séance at Keeler's, did not remember or know whether she had held two or three slates above the table, with him! This lady struck one as having quite average intelligence. Hardly any of them (men or women) had any clear mental picture of the séance, and evidently the most elementary precautions had been overlooked.

Again, as to the credulity of many of the sitters. Let me illustrate this by an example. A wealthy man of the character I have drawn became a rabid convert to spiritualism, and soon swallowed everything that was presented in its name. The medium resolved that his credulity should result in some financial benefit to himself. He began by telling the "sucker" (mediums call them "suckers," when they get to this stage, and are ready for "plucking") that he (the me-

dium) had been told that it was the sitter's grand privilege to civilize Jupiter! The inhabitants of that planet, he was told, were in a semi-barbarous condition, and had no harvesting and farm implements, so that they were in a very backward and wretched condition. The medium suggested that, if it were possible to send them any implements, in any way, it would be one great step towards civilizing them. Now, it so happened that the sitter in question was the head and owner of a very large firm that manufactured farm implements of the kind. The medium actually had the audacity to suggest that he (the sitter) bring or send certain ploughs, and other minor farm implements, and that he (the medium) would then dematerialize them and materialize them on Jupiter! In this manner he was to civilize that planet!

The sitter agreed to this; in fact, he became enthusiastic over the idea. He sent several ploughs and implements of the kind, and these the medium certainly managed to dispose of in some manner. The medium then requested larger and more expensive implements, and so on, until the huge harvesters and other similar pieces of machinery were being sent to the medium's house. Finally, the medium's confederate rebelled. He said: "It's all very well to get two or three hundred dollar rakes and things of that kind, but when you begin to get five thousand dollar harvesters,—count me out." A dispute took place between the two, which ended in a rupture and separation. The confederate stated that if he (the medium) insisted in receiving such articles as those last received, they would soon be caught and locked up, (as, of course, they were merely selling the implements to a near-by dealer in such goods). True to his promise, the confederate went to the sitter, and told him of the "game" that was being played upon him. He refused to believe it. "Come," said the confederate, "and I'll prove my words. You gave the medium a horse and cart yesterday, did you not,—that he was to dematerialize?" The sitter acknowledged that he had. "Then," said the confederate, "come with me, and I'll show you where it is." They went down to a certain well-known stable, and there, sure enough, was the sitter's horse and cart. The confederate pointed these out, and especially

indicated the number on the cart, positively identifying it as the one given to the medium the day before. The sitter looked at it critically for some minutes. "Yes," he said at length, "it looks like my cart, and it's the same number—but, but it *isn't* mine; mine's on Jupiter!" How is one to argue with an intelligence like that?

In a case such as the above, it will be observed that the border line has been actually crossed which separates the criminal from the purely farcical. There are a number of incidents of this character that might be cited—a number being given in *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium*. Other cases are cited in *The Vampires of Onset*; and, indeed, it may be said that cases of the kind are by no means uncommon. One case in particular I was told of,—full details being given—that is especially revolting. Two young girls were left alone in the world, with some eight thousand dollars between them. They became interested in the exhibitions of a certain materializing medium, and were frequent attendants at his séances. He was, at that time, holding forth in Boston, Mass. One of the materialized forms was that of a young man, and with him the elder of the young ladies in question fell desperately in love. This was apparently returned by the spirit, and a mock marriage was arranged—a well-known trance medium officiating at the marriage, and uniting the mortal and the spirit in a bond that was to last a few hours only. The upshot of this incident was that the unfortunate girl found herself left penniless and *enciente*, the child being born in due time. Needless to say the spirit husband never returned after the night of the eventful ceremony. I have the names of all the mediums and other persons engaged in this infamous transaction in my possession; and it is possible that they may be published at some time, should the occasion arise.

The above will at least give the general reader some idea of the state of things that exists among a certain class of spiritualists and mediums, and I need not dwell upon the point unduly here. I only wish to show and to demonstrate that things of this kind *do* occur,—since I have found a tendency to disbelieve facts of this character, when related,—particu-

larly when told to persons who have discovered little or no fraud themselves. I know for certain, however, that facts of the character indicated do occur, and that frequently; and the sooner the fact is acknowledged, the better for the spiritualists as a whole. Mediums have the greatest contempt, as a rule, for the average investigator, whom they consider clumsy, stupid, and "dead easy." They use this latter phrase frequently, among themselves, and I have frequently heard it employed in free conversation. Again, at one of the materializing séances I attended, the medium stated quite freely that he would have to go into the house, now, and "get his paraphernalia ready!" It will be seen that, in the above, there is little attempt to conceal the fact of the fraudulent nature of the phenomena.

There is a large trade, too, throughout the country, in medium's apparatus—a trade which most persons are entirely ignorant of, and even sceptical about, when they are told that it exists. Mr. Will Irwin published a great deal of evidence in connection with this subject in his articles in *Collier's Weekly*, before referred to. I have before me, as I write, a catalog of a firm in the West, devoted entirely to medium's apparatus for producing fraudulent phenomena—slate writing, sealed letter reading, raps, platform tests, etc., all being advertised freely, as for sale. Perhaps I can best illustrate my point by quoting one or two of these advertisements *verbatim*. Thus, we read:

No. 147. Luminous Materialistic (*sic*) Ghosts and Forms.

We furnish these of all kinds and sizes. Full luminous female form and dress (with face that convinces) which can be produced in ordinary room or circle, appears gradually, floats about room and disappears. Nothing superior. Price, \$50.00.

No. 146. Luminous Materializing Hands and Faces.

A striking feature in dark or semi-dark séances. For all materializing mediums, the production of luminous hands or faces is a *sine qua non* of success. We furnish you complete and explicit directions for the making and production of same, or furnish them complete and ready for use as desired. Also draperies, head-dresses, and ornaments of the finest quality known. . . . Complete and ready for use, from \$5.00 to \$25.00, depending on scope and capacity required.

Nor are the physical phenomena the only ones that are so advertised. Thus, we read:

No. 170. Clairvoyance, Psychometry and Platform Tests.

There is at all times a good demand for a clever and intellectual lecturer or medium who can give good and genuine tests from the platform. Nearly every issue of the Spiritualistic journals contain inquiries for just such mediums. We can furnish you the only reliable system, complete in every detail, which will enable you to at once take up this interesting and remunerative branch of the profession. With this you can satisfy the most captious audience, and all the tests are genuine.

This method is boundless in its scope, and is the only one you can rely on. It is suitable for either lady or gentleman, and is being constantly used by many of our most successful mediums. We have, for many years, supplied this to our clients to whom it has given perfect satisfaction. It is so perfect that at a few days' notice you can fill satisfactorily engagements in any ordinary sized town, in any part of the country. Our former price was \$100.00. We now offer it to you for \$25.00.

This will at least serve to give the reader some idea of the amount of fraudulent mediumship there is in this country, and the extent of the trade in apparatus of all kinds among mediums. There are men who make it a life business to manufacture goods of this character, and who do nothing else. It is improbable that anything of the sort occurs in England, or in any other country than America. It does, however, exist here; and some of the Spiritualistic Journals are of late taking a very broad and sound stand on this question of fraud. In apparatus and in mental tests of all kinds this network of trickery exists; and I can best illustrate this, perhaps, by placing before my readers the evidence that has been collected for the existence of the famous *Blue Book*,—of the existence of which many spiritualistic journals, and indeed even a critic of Mr. Podmore's type, is sceptical. I endeavored to lay before my readers some of this evidence in my *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, (pp. 312-18), to which I would refer the critic. That portion of my book has received the severest criticism from many quarters, on the ground that I did not substantiate the statements there made. I shall endeavor to do so more fully here. Let me say, for the benefit of those readers

who may be unfamiliar with the term, that the medium's *Blue Book* is the trade or technical name for a book full of names of spiritualists, and persons interested in psychical subjects, and information about such persons—who their friends and relatives were; from what they died, where they lived, and in fact all about them. This information is handed round, from one medium to another, and exchanged, in return for other information; so that there is a constant system of interchange of information about sitters going on all the time,—all over the country; the result of which is this: that, if any person frequents one or more sêances, he is henceforward sure to receive good “tests” in whatever part of the country he may go, simply by reason of the test information contained in the *Blue Book*,—which is passed round, giving this information about sitters. I understand that Dr. Hodgson once had in his possession, for a short time only, a portion of one of these *Blue Books*, which was spirited away, by some mysterious means, at a later date. The author of *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium* left several of these Books in the office of the publishers, Farrington & Co., 37 East Tenth St., St. Paul, Minn., and, as I was living, at the time, in Minneapolis, Minn., I went over to St. Paul, purposely to look at this book—only to find the office closed, and the publishers out of business. Mr. E. D. Lunt, of Boston, knew something of the Boston *Blue Book*,—I quoted his statement in my own book, as referring to Boston alone. Mr. David P. Abbott, on page 14 of his *Behind the Scenes with the Mediums*, tells us that: “. . . Some time ago a certain medium came to grief in Omaha. The police confiscated his paraphernalia, in which was found a *Blue Book* of Omaha. The public was invited to call and see this book; and believers could go and read their own questions, written in this book, with their own names signed to them. . . .” He refers to the book in several other places.*

* In reply to a letter from Dr. Hyslop, asking him about this *Blue Book*, Mr. Abbott wrote back:

“My chief source of information about the *Blue Book* of Boston was ‘Mysteries of the Séance’ by Ed. Lunt. Think Mr. Carrington has a copy. Lunt ought to know where he got the information. There was a materializing medium, one Farrell (right name Ohara, now in prison in Joliet, Ill., for diamond swindles) who told me he had seen the book, or

Now the "Progressive Thinker"—the leading spiritualistic paper in America—comes out and frankly acknowledges that such test books ("generals," they are often called in the profession) do exist, and publishes a statement of one man that he has such a book in his possession; and of another that he had often contributed to its contents, though he had not seen it himself. The "Brotherhood," as the inner circle of mediums is called, have been so extremely careful in guarding this secret that it is only within the last few years that anything of the kind has been even suspected. Doubtless much new evidence will soon come to light on the point. I know such a system existed at Lily Dale, for two reasons (1) I once picked up a scrap of paper, on which was copied an obituary notice, and on the side were remarks as to the person who was to receive this fine and surprising test that evening! At some materializing or trumpet medium's séance, this person's *soi-disant* spirit was doubtless to appear, and announce his own death—a magnificent test! As it was a *carbon* copy, I assumed (justly, I think) that it was intended to be used by

had extracts from it, or something of the kind. I forget the names he gave me..... He had three Blue Books which I saw. One was for Cincinnati. He had a very fine outfit of luminous costumes, and a splendid acquaintance with all the mediums....."

On writing to Mr. E. D. Lunt, asking him for particulars, he replied to me as follows:

Silverton, Oregon, Dec. 23, 1907.

Dear Mr. Carrington:

Your letter of inquiry received. Also one of same tenor forwarded from Boston.

In reply, will say: I saw a so-called Blue Book in Los Angeles, Cal., several years ago—in 1896, I think. It was in the possession of a medium who had abandoned the business. I endeavored to secure it, but failed. Harrison D. Barrett, late president of the N. S. A., assured me that he had seen one, and failed to secure it for some reason. The one I saw was simply a small book (printed), with names and data of San Francisco spiritualists. I believe that in those earlier years such a method was generally used by fake mediums. But their use was, I believe, abandoned, and the simpler and less dangerous method of transmitting such information from one to another, personally, adopted. The question whether or no such a book, colored blue, and printed, was or is in existence is, it seems to me, immaterial. Care was evidently taken by the mediums to destroy all such evidence. Had I anticipated that such a demand would later exist for proof of the Blue Book's existence, I should have made an extra effort to secure it, and possibly with success.

Sincerely yours,

ED. D. LUNT.

more than one medium. (2) The second piece of evidence is far more conclusive. I referred earlier in this Report to a certain medium,—a lady who had, in various ways, greatly assisted me in unearthing fraud, while I was at Lily Dale. She informed me that she had been asked, the year before, to join a "medium's club," which was formed for the purpose of exchanging information about sitters, in the manner described. Upon her refusing to have anything to do with it, they practically boycotted her, and refused her admittance to any séance thenceforth. She was unable to say whether the Club existed or not, when I was there, (1907), but presumed that it did. I heard from other sources that it did, but, naturally enough, I could get no positive *proof* of the fact.

I shall now lay before my readers the best, newest and most positive evidence that has so far been published on this question of the *Blue Book*,—since it has all been obtained at first hand, and directly from the man who originally conceived the idea, worked it up, and finally marketed it. Mr. Will Irwin, in his investigations into fraudulent mediumship, on behalf of *Collier's Weekly*, personally interviewed several of those most intimately and closely connected with the publication, and has kindly consented to make a detailed and *verbatim* statement of his experiences, while looking into this question of the *Blue Book*, and of what he discovered in connection therewith. I think that, after this statement, there can be no reasonable doubt left in anyone's mind, that such a publication exists, and that it is, or at least has been, used by public mediums for the purposes indicated. His report will speak for itself.

STATEMENT OF MR. WILL IRWIN.

I spent about ten weeks investigating the subject of fraudulent mediumship for *Collier's Weekly*. Before that time, I had been investigating it in a personal and desultory way for about six years. My work for *Collier's* took me to Boston, Brooklyn, New York, Chicago and some small cities of the middle West. From the first, I made a special effort to run down the old *Blue Book*. I had great hopes of being able to get a copy of this book when I started out. Certain investigators of the Boston Society for Psy-

chical Research told me that it had been issued in the form of a directory and that, from time to time, "supplemental lists," as they called them, had been got out for the subscribers. I understand that a certain professional medium once left these supplemental lists in a street car and the finder turned them over to Dr. Hodgson. They were spirited away, however, apparently by some spiritualist, and have never been seen again. I found, upon inquiring from those who had seen them, that these so-called "Supplemental Lists" were in typewriting.

This *Blue Book* chase puzzled me very much. Everywhere I heard of it and nowhere could I find anyone among the investigators of fraudulent mediumship or the ex-mediums who had ever seen it. Finally I met, in the middle West, a dealer in paraphernalia and tricks for mediums. I am under obligation not to give his name nor to give the circumstances which led up to his speaking to me as frankly as he did. It is enough for me to say that he appeared to be telling the truth and that many facts which I have discovered since proved the truth of certain other things that he told me.

He says that the *Blue Book* was started as an enterprise about the year 1903. It was not a book, at all. That is the thing which has put us all off the track in looking for it. It was a sort of directory. It was a kind of agency for information, a great deal like "Bradstreet's." They had agents among the professional mediums in every big city in the United States. It was the business of these people to send them classified information on habitual "sitters" and to keep that information well up to date. These agents were paid partly in free service from the *Blue Book* and partly in cash. My information is under the impression that those who had its privileges paid a certain sum each year as subscribers; that entitled them simply to the privileges of membership, as it were. Then, when they wanted information in any district, any street or any city, they wrote to the *Blue Book*, which sent them typewritten lists according to the amount of the service rendered. For example: a medium could write from New York, asking for the whole *Blue Book* on New York, or he could write for all the *Blue Book* information on the theatrical profession, let us say. Again, he might write for all the sitters listed on Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, between 60th and 75th Streets. My informant is under the impression that the charge was regulated solely by the number of names furnished. The so-called "Supplemental Lists" which the Boston Society for Psychical Research has seen, were probably only the Boston lists, furnished in typewriting by the *Blue Book* people in Chicago.

The plan, it appears, did not work very well. My informant says he thinks it practically died in a year or two, although the original projectors of the enterprise made use of the lists they

had for some time. It was too expensive to keep up, as the subscribers, being professional mediums, could not be trusted to keep the lists to themselves. One medium would get a list for a certain street and then peddle it out to the others in her region.

This name of "Book" has caused great confusion in our conceptions of this institution; moreover, the term "Blue Book" has been adopted into the slang of the profession. Any agency for the dissemination of information among mediums is now called a "Blue Book." To the best of my belief, such "Books" are in existence in Boston and Chicago. I got this information, also, from dealers in supplies and paraphernalia in those places. I approached these dealers in the guise of a professional medium coming to buy paraphernalia and tricks. As I talked the slang of the profession and could assume a wide acquaintance with other professionals, one of them did not suspect me. The other may have had his suspicions, and I am a little in doubt about the frankness of his revelations. In Boston I talked with W. D. Leroy, 103 Court Street, who conducts what is called a "School of Magic" there. It is simply a house for furnishing supplies to conjurers, which does a big underground business in tricks and apparatus for mediums. I had better say, just here, that this traffic in supplies for mediums is much more profitable than the traffic in straight conjuring apparatus. It pays the heavy tariff on contraband goods. The dealer who told me about the *Blue Book* was once in the business of supplying conjurers. He found that there was no particular profit in that. The conjurers were working open and above board, knew the value of the goods, and, if they were overcharged, would go to someone else; but the mediums, working in the dark, always afraid of exposure, would pay eight or ten times what an article or a trick was worth. This fear of exposure on their part leads them to do ridiculous things. My informant of the *Blue Book* once had his business in Chicago. He says that they never dared come to his office. They would make appointments for some remote place and at some unearthly hour of the night. There they would meet him and give their orders. He had to go to the same trouble to deliver the goods. Once, he tried moving out into the suburbs, but even then, when he was living in a plain cottage, under an assumed name, they would creep out very late at night. It got to be such a bother that he moved away from Chicago.

To return to Leroy: I have every reason to believe that he took me for what I purported to be. I spent two afternoons with him, bargaining for spirit robes, reaching-rods and new tricks. It is a professional point with these men never to reveal the name of any customer to any other customer. I did ask him several times, however, about "test books," saying that I was in hopes of picking up some business in Boston and that, as I was new,

test books would be a great help to me. Leroy protested that he did not deal in test books, saying that it was not worth his while, but that there was a man who made a business of trading in test books and of gathering information. "He drops in here every now and then," said Leroy. "The last time was about two or three months ago." I asked Leroy if he could put me in touch with this man, but at that point he seemed to get a little suspicious and I thought it best to change the subject. I returned to it later, however, and Leroy then told me that I had better get in touch with some of the other mediums and let them put me up against the *Blue Book*. At the close of the interview, when I had nothing further to lose, I asked him where the *Blue Book* was published, but he only said, "Why don't you talk to some of the other good mediums?" I found nothing more definite about the Boston *Blue Book*, not having time to work that town thoroughly for information, but I noticed this significant fact: That everyone connected with the inside of the faking, professional mediumship in Boston takes it for granted that there is a *Blue Book* and mentions it, just as one mentions the directory. Personally, I have no doubt that such a book is in existence.

My experience in Chicago took me to "Professor" Philip H. Meyers, 32 Sherman Street, whose ostensible business is the manufacture of wax figures and practitioner of facial massage. Meyers is a talkative, imaginative young man. As a matter of opinion, I don't set too much store by any of his statements. While he sold me a lot of "spirit" apparatus, including a reaching-rod and silicate flaps for slate-writing tricks, I had a suspicion, toward the close of my second visit to him, that he understood my motives as well as I understood his. That, however, is only a feeling. He betrayed it in nothing he said. In the course of our conversation, which lasted, altogether, five or six hours, Meyers dropped the following facts concerning the *Blue Book* and the trade in information and tests: The old *Blue Book* is dead long ago—so long dead that he can't remember just who it was that ran it; moreover, Meyers, like Leroy, keeps the names of his clients.

The Chicago *Blue Book*, on the card index system, is kept by an old medium and is pretty well patronized by all the mediums in Chicago, who pay her regular fees for the information. A good deal of business, apparently, is done over the telephone. This came out in several of the tales he told me, just dropped accidentally. The medium, wanting information on Mrs. John Smith, excuses herself for a moment, goes to the telephone, gets the *Blue Book* and asks for everything they have on Mrs. John Smith. Meyers asked me what I thought of those "pony books." I told him I didn't think much of them, thereby leading him on to reveal that these are little private test books on Chicago which

the mediums are peddling around a great deal in that city now, until getting into the *Blue Book*. They consider the *Blue Book* rather badly kept and rather a back number. These books are up to date and include a lot of sitters. As the success of the *Blue Book* depends upon mediums sending in all of their information continually, of course, these pony books hurt it a great deal.

Meyers told me something I never heard elsewhere, and present, therefore, with some misgivings: That two of the mediums established, not long ago, what he called a traveling *Blue Book*. They went from city to city making collections of test books, putting them together, and then peddling out information to other mediums. He said that this did not work, and, about two years ago, these two people went out of the business. Another one of his stories has an interesting bearing on this case. A certain professional medium—a man—apparently in some way connected with the two people who ran the traveling *Blue Book*, had published secretly a book, whose title escaped me before I could get it down on paper, but which is a sort of Manual of Fraudulent Mediumship. It is so written that, if it fell into the hands of the police or of investigators, nothing could be proved by it. It appears to be a masterpiece of double meaning. I quote from memory some things which Meyers quoted to me from it: The author says, (of course, I am putting this in my own words): "Conditions for slate writing and most physical manifestations are always better when the table used by the medium has rubber tips on the legs. This, in some mysterious way which our minds cannot comprehend, helps to attract spirit magnetism. . . . Always arrange your circle with the most experienced 'sitters' and the deepest believers nearest to you, and put the sceptics at the rear of the room or, at least, furthest away. This is to insure unity and harmony in the circle. The presence of a sceptic near the medium is frequently fatal to the best manifestations of mediumship." I think these samples will show just what the book is. It is a treatise on the finer points of the medium's art. The price is \$25 a copy, and Meyers says he would recommend 'any young medium like me' to invest in it, as it is well worth the money.

Perhaps I may do a little good to the cause here by digressing a moment to say that the Bangs Sisters, according to Meyers, are the wonder and admiration of the profession for their work in spirit paintings and their original system of slate-writing. I have never sat with the Bangs Sisters, and I neglected to ask him what the externals of the trick are. Meyers says he himself has never quite fathomed it, and that the other mediums have gone in flocks to learn the secret. Of course, no one has any idea that they are genuine. It is just a general belief in their expert trickery. Meyers declared that he *did* know how they produced their

spirit paintings. He said it was largely a matter of chemistry, and needed for successful performance a permanent abiding place. He offered to sell me the secret of this trick—saying, however, that it would cost a good deal. I did not invest.

So far as my investigations went (and, of course, it must be understood that they were comparatively superficial, seeing that I was doing a popular and not a scientific piece of work) I am convinced that the exchange of information and 'test books' among fraudulent professional mediums is almost universal. Meyers remarked, off-hand, "They're carrying this test book business too far; everybody is crazy about it. I believe in working alone, the way they used to; it takes more work and more talents, but you have got things that nobody else gets and your work is much more original. The best mediums I know work alone, but you can't get the most of them to say that it is the best way." I think that all the mediums in a given group—say, those in one ward of Brooklyn—usually stand together, passing sitters on from one to the other and sending information in advance.

Here is something which I know about test books—second-hand really. A professional "spook" who played spirit in cabinets for several fraudulent mediums on the Pacific coast, once made an elaborate confession to a friend of mine, a man in whose word I have absolute reliance. He says that in the far West the 'test book' business is the very kernel of fraudulent mediumship, particularly for those mediums who travel. A medium first enters a certain district, and, by his "clairvoyance," his visit to the graveyards and his gossip around the saloons and stores, prepares the "test book;" then comes to San Francisco or Denver, meets a medium who has been traveling on another circuit, and makes a trade with him. Then they exchange circuits and, of course, the book is very valuable for a medium just "hitting a new town." I know by personal experience that in San Francisco information is exchanged all the time. Madame Myers was a well-known "ten-cent-circle clairvoyant" on Macallister Street, I think. I went to her very often. She pumped out of me a good many things, some of them true, some of them lies of mine, told to confuse her. Gradually almost all the mediums on Macallister Street would repeat some of the lies I had told Madame Myers, just as soon as they saw me. I succeeded in getting the fiction of a sister "Nellie," who I never had, implanted in all that group of mediums.

I notice, in an exposure of a materializing medium lately published in the "Progressive Thinker," that mediums in this case called their test books "Generals." That seems to be the latest slang. I remember now that Meyers dropped that phrase once or twice in my conversation with him, and that I always jumped

the conversation quickly at that point for fear of betraying myself, since I did not know what he meant. This leads me to say that mediums have a regular "Yegg" slang among themselves, a few phrases of which I know, and much of which, undoubtedly, I do not know. It enables them to know each other, and to pass information without betraying themselves to an outsider. In reality it is very largely a sort of sarcastic turn on certain words. For example: the word "spirit" in connection with a materializing séance, means just what it purports to mean; but the word "spook" refers always to the person who is playing the part of the spirit. "The spook for the spirit of Mary Brown was Mrs. Smith," is an example of a piece of conversation I heard from one of them once. Again, to speak of a man as a "believer" means just what it seems to mean; to speak of a man as "my believer" means that he is one of those persons hired to get up in a public clairvoyant séance and acknowledge the truth of some wonderful revelation which the medium has made to him; and so on, down the line. I understand that it is possible for two professional mediums to carry on a conversation of double meaning, without once betraying themselves to an outsider who sits in the same room. It is a singular fact—reasonable enough when one considers it—that the numerous exposes of fraudulent mediumship which have been published from time to time are in great demand among professionals as test books. Leroy, of Boston, and "George L. Williams," of Syracuse, Indiana, carry a full line of them, including the "Revelations of a Spirit Medium," "The Vampires of Onset," "Spiritualism: Bottom Facts," etc. "Williams" gets out a catalog of books on spiritualism which includes all those exposure books. "The Revelations of a Spirit Medium," which is, undoubtedly, the best of these old works, is practically out of print now, and I had to pay \$5 for a copy. The man who sold this to me would buy up the copyright of this book and get a new edition, (so great is the demand in the profession) were it not that he cannot find the publishers. There is a great mystery about this book. Again I digress to speak of it: The Society for Psychical Research, I believe, has tried for years to find out who was the author. Just after it was published, the publishers suddenly went out of business and moved away. The dealer in apparatus who told me about the *Blue Book* says that it was either the work of a medium named Thompson or his partner—he does not know which.* Both of these men went to Eng-

* I think this is an error. There is a book now long out of print, entitled *The Confessions of a Medium* (Griffith & Farran, West Corner, St. Paul's Churchyard, London; and E. P. Dutton, New York), with which this book is probably confounded. My reasons for thinking so are the following: There is positive evidence that the book entitled *The Confessions of a Medium* was written by Thomson's partner, because he fre-

land, of which one was a native—when they had made enough money out of the business to retire—and both died there. The dealer said also that he considered many other so-called “confessions” of mediums to be partly untrue and imaginative, but that this one was “true from the ground up,” as he expressed it.

Mr. Carrington’s book, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, being the most complete exposé that has been published as yet, will probably be in great demand as soon as it begins to be passed around in the profession, and, in fact, all the dealers have it already.

WILL IRWIN.

I must now draw this lengthy Report to a close. I regret that it is not more favorable to the claims of Spiritualism than it is, as that is a creed I should much like to see scientifically grounded and established. I have great sympathy for the belief, and, as elsewhere stated, I myself am more spiritualist than anything else. I have always held to the belief that there were genuine phenomena—which belief has been accentuated since my sittings with Mrs. Piper. Nevertheless, it is essential that the conditions existent at all the Spiritualistic camps should be thoroughly exposed, and the position made plain. Whenever physical phenomena were produced, fraud was always found to exist. So far as my own experience goes, I have never seen any genuine physical test, one that was not palpably and obviously fraudulent;

quently refers to him by name throughout the pages of that book, and relates their experiences together. The name of Thomson occurs very frequently. He is, in fact, the “hero” of the book. Now, as to the author of *The Revelations of a Spirit Medium*. A number of us have, for some years, been endeavoring to find, with certainty, the author of this book. I tried, and came to the conclusion that it was a medium named Mansfield, because a well-known medium of that name published, some years ago, a little pamphlet entitled *Spiritualistic Phenomena*,—explaining a number of slate tricks, materialization frauds, etc., and in it gives one to understand that he is the author of the larger book, from which he freely quotes. He is careful not to assert that such is the case, however. Dr. Hodgson tried, and probably came nearer the truth than anyone else has. In the course of some correspondence I had with Miss Edmunds, after Dr. Hodgson’s death, this question of the authorship of the book came up, and Miss Edmunds referred me to a gentleman, living in the West, who had in his possession a copy of this book,—on the fly leaf of which were the following words:

[At top of page.] “Is the author Donovan or Pidgeon?”

[At bottom of page.] “Miss H— writes on December 8th, 1903, that she is sure the author of this book is Donovan. Mr. Bundy had told her, but that Donovan had slipped her memory, but was recalled by my note.”

R. H.

and I say this after a prolonged personal study of the facts and phenomena,—in the theoretical possibility of which I still believe, in spite of my own unfortunate personal experience. I can do no more than investigate; and whenever I have investigated, I have found fraud, and nothing but fraud. It is unfortunate; but it is a fact. It was the same at Lily Dale. Doubtless a few genuine trance and test mediums go there every year, (who are themselves disgusted with the prevalent conditions); but, with that exception, there is nothing to be found in the camp that even suggests the genuine; but, on the contrary, much that suggests that all is fraudulent. And it is the duty of every scientifically minded person to assume that any phenomenon is produced by fraud if the possibility of its having been so produced is present,—and there are no reasons for our thinking otherwise. Until like phenomena are produced under conditions which render fraud impossible, we must always assume that fraud is in fact the actual explanation; since the *onus probandi* always rests with the spiritualists, and not with the sceptics. Or, if it be objected that this is an unfair attitude to take, it may be pointed out, at least, that the existence and reality of the phenomena can never be proved to exist, to a sceptical world, so long as this other interpretation of the facts remains open and possible. It must always be remembered, in this connection, that it does not matter a particle whether the facts *really exist* or not; for purposes of conversion, we must always depend upon what the *evidence proves*. This is a distinction that cannot be kept too clearly in mind. But when, as at Lily Dale, not only is the possibility open for our interpretation of the phenomena as fraudulent; but when there is, on the contrary, abundant evidence to prove conclusively that they actually *were* produced in that manner, what are we to assume—what are we justified in assuming—but that fraud and trickery is the true and sufficient explanation of all the physical phenomena (slate-writing, materializations, trumpet tests, and what not) that were offered in the name of Spiritualism, and witnessed by me during my stay at the Camp in question—the leading, most noted, and most respected Camp in America?

BOOK REVIEWS.

Animal Magnetism. By J. P. F. DELEUZE. Translated by Thomas C. Hartshorn. Fowler and Wells Co., New York.

Psychic Life and Laws. By CHARLES OLIVER SAHLER, M. D. Fowler and Wells Co., New York. 1901.

Human Magnetism: Its Nature, Physiology and Psychology. By H. S. DRAYTON, LL. B., M. D. Fowler and Wells Co., New York. 1895.

Psychology and Pathology of Handwriting. By MAGDALENE KINTZEL-THUMM. Fowler and Wells Co., New York. 1905.

The first volume has now nothing more than a historical value. Deleuze has collected a large number of facts, current in his time,—which was at the end of the Eighteenth and the beginning of the Nineteenth centuries. He uses the term "magnetism" in the parlance of that time, much as Hume spoke of "animal spirits" and others of "vital fluids." But the book exhibits phenomena that indicate clearly enough how Immanuel Kant could study Swedenborg so carefully. There is no such application of critical methods in regard to either the verification or classification of his facts as is now insisted on in psychic research. This, of course, could not be expected at that time. But historically the book will have its value even tho its views have long since been superseded.

Dr. Sahler's book is the fruit of his work in the sanatorium which he has established on the Hudson, and is a popular representation of his views of the psychic processes associated with the various forms of mental healing. He does not discard normal psychology in his treatment of the subject tho its use is not and perhaps could not be incorporated in the work to any large extent. There is some admixture of his religious views of the subject. But as a whole the book would help many people into a more intelligent conception of the subject with which he deals.

Dr. Drayton's little volume is a later summary of facts than those of Deleuze. It also includes some discussion of the supernormal and quotes some of the experiments of the English Society for Psychical Research on Telepathy. It is seriously and carefully written, with no tendencies to run off into side issues or cranky theories. General readers not familiar with the subject of unusual mental phenomena would obtain a clear conception of them here in less space than in the more scientific volumes.

The work on the "Psychology and Pathology of Handwriting" would have been much better if the author had not tried to determine some definite relation between certain people's handwriting and their character and intelligence. I do not believe that we have in handwriting any invariable index of men's intelligence or character. The subject deserves study from the physiological side, and it is interesting to find here specimens of handwriting that will interest all of us, whether as scientists or as collectors of autographs. The relation between handwriting and the growth of intelligence deserves study, but "psychometry" and "palmistry" and similar things, even if they do bear the same relation to a scientific investigation of character as alchemy does to chemistry, have discouraged a real examination of the phenomena.

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